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THE BLESSED VIRGIN IN THE FATHERS OF THE FIRST SIX CENTURIES.

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HERBERTUS CARD. VAUGHAN.

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THE BLESSED VIRGIN IN THE FATHERS OF THE FIRST SIX CENTURIES.

BY

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WITH A PREFACE BY HIS EMINENCE

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Dedication

TO

His Eminence Herbert Cardinal Vaughan,

ARCHBISHOP OF WESTMINSTER,

CARDINAL PRIEST OF THE TITLE OF SAN GREGORIO ON THE CŒLIAN HILL.

My Lord Cardinal,

I am very grateful to your Eminence for having permitted me to dedicate this book to you, and that you have so kindly promised to write for it some words of preface.

It struck me as a circumstance of happy omen that the publication of my volume on S. Peter's Roman Episcopate, should, after several years' labour, coincide with the Sacerdotal Jubilee of Our Holy Father Leo XIII., and be dedicated to the illustrious Cardinal Newman. And it now affords me increased encouragement that this Patristic work in testimony of Our Lady's privileges, should, at length, appear in the year of His Episcopal Jubilee, and be dedicated to your Eminence, who has, in conjunction with all the Bishops of the Province of Westminster, so recently made the solemn act of consecrating our country anew to the Blessed Virgin and S. Peter, at the initiation of the Supreme Pontiff, and after his explicit recognition of England's claim to her ancient and glorious Title of "The Dowry of Mary."

I remain,

My Lord Cardinal,

With much respect,

Your devoted Servant,

T. LIVIUS, C.SS.R.

PREFACE BY HIS EMINENCE.

This work, to which I gladly prefix a few words of preface, will become a standard book of reference. It was much needed. That which its author had already done for S. Peter, he has now successfully accomplished for the Blessed Virgin Mary. And I am not depreciating his former work by saying that his latter is by far the more important :—the more important because, whereas many books have been published containing ample reference to the acknowledgment of S. Peter's authority in the primitive Church, none has hitherto been presented to the English public setting forth the copious testimonies of the writers of the first six centuries to the doctrinal position in the Church of the Blessed Mother of God. This is the task fulfilled in the volume, *The Blessed Virgin in the Fathers of the First Six Centuries.*

This work is destined to render a double service: first, it will deepen and strengthen the devotion of Catholics to the Blessed Virgin, by setting before them the witness to her prerogatives and to her position, afforded by the earliest Fathers of the Church ;—it will teach them how closely they are united in sentiment as in faith with the Fathers and Christian writers of the first six centuries ;—it will supply them with spiritual food by opening to them a granary of golden and delicious corn, the door of which had hitherto been in great measure closed to them. Knowledge, instruction, meditation, piety, and love, concerning Mary, are all combined in rich proportions in the abundant harvest which F. Livius has gathered in from the writings of the early Fathers.

The second service rendered is second only in importance to the first. She, whose office it has been to "destroy all heresies," has ever been a stumbling-block in the way of non-Catholics. It could hardly be otherwise than that the *Tower of David*, the *Ark of the Covenant*, the *Gate of Heaven* should present a sensible and formidable obstacle to the progress of error. She, whose foot was destined to crush the serpent's head, must ever stand in her calm beauty and power as an enemy in the path of the seed of the serpent. But there is a vast multitude of non-Catholics whose souls are being drawn back from the errors they have inherited to the Church of Christ. It is not enough to show them the love which the present children of God bear to the Mother of God: it is not enough to point out to them the devotion and faith of England during a period of a thousand years. All this, in their ignorance and prejudice, they explain away as parasitical overgrowth, attributable, they say, to the distinguishing character of the middle ages, and to man's proclivity to corruption and superstition.

What is needed is to remount the stream of testimony to its source,—to exhibit without apology or hesitation our own devotion to Mary,—to set forth, as in the *Dowry of Mary*, the history of the devotion of our Catholic English ancestors to her, up to the seventh century,—and then to gather together and display before the eyes of all men, who have eyes to see, the teaching of the primitive Church, as attested in the writings of the first six centuries, as to the position and the prerogatives of the Blessed Mother of God.

The [illegible] and incidental expressions of these ancient writers on such a subject as Mary are as valuable and as clear an indication of the direction taken by the mind and heart of the Church, during its early youth, as the more developed and studied treatises by writers in modern times are of their own belief and of that of their co-religionists. The faith is the same. But the Church is neither a me-

channel nor a petrified creation. She is a living Bride, the Bride of the Lamb. She, like Mary in the Gospel, is "ever pondering in her heart over the things she has heard" in the original revelation made to her by the Bridegroom. And as she gives utterance to the thoughts of her heart in the language and expressions which become hers, she is perpetually testifying to the truth, the fulness, the life and the joy of the things which she originally heard. Thus you will find in the teaching of Irenæus, Tertullian, Augustine, the Gregorys, Epiphan, Ambrose, and other writers of the first six centuries on Mary's position as the second Eve, in her excellence, her sanctity, and her power, the teaching of S. Alphonsus and of Blessed Grignon de Montfort and others, who have in modern days popularised devotion to Mary. The truth is ever the same, all through the centuries, carefully guarded by the authority of the Church;—but the language in which it is clothed, in which it is conveyed to the mind of the people, is the language of the day, the language which is spoken and understood. And the more the original seed of truth becomes trito-tod by the devout mind, generation after generation, the more pervasive becomes its fragrance.

I trust that this most valuable addition to our literature upon the Office of Mary in the work of our Redemption and sanctification, will meet with the cordial reception which it deserves from devout Catholics, on the one hand, and from sincere and earnest inquirers outside the Church, on the other.

It is a pleasing incident to record that it has been granted to two sons of S. Alphonsus Mary de' Liguori, to give to the English-speaking peoples two standard works on Mary, one dealing with the Devotion of England to Mary from the sixteenth century up to the time of the primitive Church, in his admirable volume, *England, Our Lady's Dowry*, and the other, completing the period of testimony, by exhaustively

gathering together the witnesses, who still speak with no uncertain sound, as to the teaching of the Church about Mary, "the Second Eve," "the Mother of the living," during the first six centuries of the Christian era.

HERBERT CARD. VAUGHAN,
Archbishop of Westminster.

Octave of the Assumption, 1893.

AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

No one, I suppose, can entertain any doubt as to the general belief and cultus that prevailed amongst Catholics with regard to the Blessed Virgin Mary from the seventh and eighth centuries, through the middle ages, down to the period of the Protestant Reformation. For the numerous works that still survive of men eminent for their sanctity and theological science, as Ildephonsus, John Damascene, Anselm, Bernard, Thomas Aquinas, Bonaventure, and many more, who wrote so profusely in her honour and proclaimed her privileges with such great explicitness—as well as the numberless examples of public and private devotion to her to be found in religious biographies, general literature, and historical records of those times—make it quite evident that the attitude of the faithful to Our Lady was then much the same as that of Catholics in the present day. Those too who may be unacquainted with the works I have alluded to must share the same conviction. For we all have still before our very eyes material monuments which bear visible witness to that past faith and devotion. I mean, we have in our midst, whether yet standing or in ruins, so many old cathedrals and churches, monasteries and abbeys, that were raised to Our Lady's name, with their shrines and other memorials in her honour; whilst in countries abroad there are ancient images and pictures, which are still held in veneration by the faithful, and carry down with them a long record of her miraculous favours, and of the people's devotion. Then again, there are so many religious Orders of men and women that have handed down in unbroken succession the same spirit, belief, and devotional practices regarding Our Lady, as they received in their origin.

Herein is a sensible continuity of the past with the present, which forms in men's minds what we may call a veritable actual memory, and is an argument which brings home the truth more forcibly and distinctly than do any proofs derivable from ancient documents.

If aught more were needed, there is the living witness of the existing generations of Catholics here at home and abroad, that have inherited in direct line, and bear testimony to the belief and practices of their forefathers in the same religious faith. Whilst, on the other hand, the notorious fact of the Reformation, and that so many have followed its tenets even to the present day, serves of itself continually to keep alive the memory of what was held about the Blessed Virgin in those former ages, and of the veneration that was then paid to her; since it was the repudiation of this belief and devotion as superstitious, that formed in great part the very reason of the first origin of the Reformation, and of the continued existence of Protestantism as a religion.

I have thus endeavoured to account for the clear and distinct conviction that is universally held of the Blessed Virgin's prominence in Catholic faith and devotion during the Middle Ages, in order the better to illustrate, by way of contrast, the difference of view that is generally taken as to the place which Our Lady occupied in the minds and hearts of Christians during the first six centuries of the Church's history.

Here there is no unanimity, but great diversity of sentiment; people's opinions are for the most part only half-formed, or formed from very insufficient data, on this side or that, according to their religious bias. Some perhaps will go so far as to maintain that the practical exhibition of devotion to the Blessed Virgin was the same in those earlier centuries as in later times; whilst others persistently assert that there was nothing in the primitive Church at all similar or corresponding to the doctrinal system and cultus of Our Lady which have prevailed from medieval times until the present day. All this, they say, was an after-growth quite unknown to the older Fathers, which first began to show

itself in the seventh and eighth centuries. Between these two extremes opinions vary with more or less vagueness.

There are many causes for this general diversity and indefiniteness of view on the matter.

First, in the case of the Early Church, we have none of what, for lack of a better term, I called sensible continuity, which serves so much to give us definite notions, and in some sort an actual memory of the real truth in medieval times. Having lost all the religious surroundings of those first centuries, and having no longer any direct results surviving from them, we can hardly picture them to our minds, and how things then happened—at least with any certainty that our picture rightly corresponds to the reality.

It seems to belong to our intellectual nature, that when we hear or read about something of past or distant occurrence, we at once form in our mind, at any rate implicitly, sensible images derived in some way from our experimental knowledge; and by clothing with this imagery the simple ideas presented to our intelligence, we give to what is abstract a concrete shape, and thus assimilate and bring home to our full consciousness the recorded event, realising it more or less vividly in its circumstances. And so far as the subjective images correspond to their objective realities, so also is our mental view of the occurrence accurate and true.

We are now, however, divided by so great an interval from those early centuries, that our break-off from all their ordinary associations is complete. The learned, no doubt, who have made a special study of the first ages of the Church, and are better acquainted with the circumstances that then surrounded the faith and religious life of Christians, will so far be able to gain a clearer view and to approximate to the truth with regard to the attitude of the faithful in those days towards the Blessed Virgin. But most people are not learned, and their ideas on the subject are very vague; or should they have formed for themselves any definite judgment, it is of no real value, being pretty sure to be wide of the truth.

I may be here allowed to apply to our subject two terms

of which Cardinal Newman discourses so largely in his Grammar of Assent, and say that the knowledge generally possessed of the Blessed Virgin's place in Medieval religion is a *real* knowledge, whilst that obtainable of the same in the first six centuries is of a *notional* character. In making this distinction I would by no means imply that there is less of objective certainty in the latter than in the former kind of knowledge; or, in other words, that truth is less the object of, and actually attainable by notional knowledge than it is by real knowledge; but the difference, conveyed by the two terms, lies rather, as I conceive, in the mind's subjective conviction of truth, and in the means whereby subjective certainty is arrived at.

What, then, was the doctrine held concerning the Blessed Virgin, both in its nature and extent, together with the actual devotion paid to her during the first six centuries of Christianity, is not now to be learnt by any sensible aids—such as existing monuments of antiquity and surviving traditions—as is our knowledge of the same in later ages, but almost exclusively from contemporaneous documents of that period that are still extant.

But here is no easy task, as is evident from the following considerations:—

1. Whilst many works of the early Fathers are lost, and of some we have only fragments; those that remain are in great number and very voluminous, treating of manifold topics with wide diversity, and written for the most part very discursively.

2. The Fathers did not treat of the Blessed Virgin *ex professo*. No formal treatise on her is to be found amongst their writings. There were other matters of a more pressing nature in those early times to engage their attention. They had to establish and set forth in detail the primary truths of Christian revelation, on the Nature of God, His Unity of Being and Trinity of Persons; the Incarnation and Divinity of the Word; the Personality of the Holy Ghost; the Unity and Catholicity of Christ's Church; the Communion of Saints, the doctrines of original sin and grace.

They had at the same time to contend against and refute many subtle heresies that endangered the faith on all points, and with which heresiarchs from every quarter were continually assailing the Church. They were occupied in interpreting, and composing commentaries on, the Sacred Scriptures. There are, moreover, many patristic writings of an occasional sort, such as sermons and homilies, exhortations, epistles and poems, and besides these, historical works, and others of a moral and philosophical character.

These are the chief subjects of the writings of the Fathers during the first six centuries. In most of them, perhaps, there is something, more or less, said of the Blessed Virgin; but what mention or treatment is made of her is incidental, and introduced only as bearing upon the principal theme and the matter in hand. There are, indeed, some very few treatises that relate especially to Our Lady, as those of S. Jerome and S. Epiphanius, written in defence of her perpetual virginity, or against a blasphemous excess in showing her honour. These, however, deal only with some particular point regarding her, and are of an apologetic nature. There are too some fugitive pieces, as sermons on her Feasts and hymns and prayers entirely devoted to her, especially in the works of S. Ephrem.

I would not be supposed to deny that much, comparatively speaking, is to be found in the early Fathers on the Blessed Virgin; for some of their treatises are full of her, as for example those of S. Ambrose on virginity, and also many portions of their Scriptural exegesis. My voluminous extracts show this. Still, with the exceptions I have made they are fragmentary, and not written on her *ex professo*.

Nowhere, then, do the early Fathers treat in a formal and positive manner, or as a whole, of the place of Our Lady in revealed Christian doctrine, and of the mutual relations that exist between her and men in the Divine economy of Redemption. What was their general view on this matter must be gathered from the various passages scattered up and down their writings.

Or perhaps I should express myself otherwise, and say

that the earliest Fathers of all, who wrote about Our Blessed Lady, *viz.*, S. Justin, S. Irenæus, and Tertullian, in their exposition of Mary as the Second Eve, give a very distinct view of what they held concerning her, and make most explicit though very brief statements as to her doctrinal position and relation to mankind, and that these are, in fact, so comprehensive as implicitly to contain whatever else any other Fathers of the first six centuries said afterwards in a desultory way about her.

3. What adds to the general impression of indefiniteness attaching to the Blessed Virgin's place in the early Church, is the frequent allegation that discrepant statements regarding her are found in the patristic works of that age. True it is that some few of the Fathers have said certain things respecting Our Lady contrary to the teaching of the greater number. Such instances, however, are after all, but very rare exceptions. They are to be found chiefly in their comments on those passages of the Gospels which bring her into public notice; and are certainly inconsistent with the idea of her absolute sinlessness, or at least of that entire perfection which the Church has of her, and the general teaching of the Fathers bears out.

Cardinal Newman has discussed this question, and the particular passages that have given rise to it, so ably and fully in his *Letter to Dr. Pusey*, that I have not thought it necessary to go over his ground again: though I have treated of the difficulty from another point of view, especially as regards S. Chrysostom, in the course of this work.

That there should be some discrepancies in the Fathers regarding Our Lady need not, however, excite surprise or cavil, when we find the same upon still graver matters. Thus certain Fathers of the third century, in high repute for their orthodoxy, express themselves on the Consubstantiality of the Son in terms that would be inadmissible after the definition of Nice. So too S. Athanasius and S. Basil speak of the knowledge of Our Lord's soul in a very different way from what S. Augustine and

S. Maximus did, and Catholic theologians would now speak.*

Great indeed is the authority of the Holy Fathers approved as such by the Church, even when taken individually, and especially of the more eminent amongst them who were Bishops, Saints, and Doctors of the Church. † But their chief authority consists in their being witnesses and expounders of the divine traditions that had come down from Christ and the Apostles, and of the Church's teaching at their own time. Hence it is that their unanimous consent on any doctrine pertaining to the Faith is regarded as tantamount to the infallible utterance of the Church herself. We may, moreover, well believe that the Holy Fathers, properly so called, received as individuals, special gifts of divine wisdom and knowledge to enable them to set forth in their purity and integrity the divine traditions and doctrines that had been handed down to them from the Apostles.

Still we are not to take an exaggerated view of the Fathers, as though they were infallible, and none of them could make a doctrinal misstatement, since it is undeniable, that at least some errors, greater or less, are to be found in the writings of individual Holy Fathers, even of those who have been approved of as such by the Church. But we

* "Even on so fundamental a dogma as the Divinity of the Holy Ghost, S. Gregory Nazianzen says: 'The New Testament did but obscurely indicate the Divinity of the Holy Ghost. . . . For it was not safe . . . when the Son's Divinity was not yet (clearly) admitted, that the Holy Ghost should be imposed on us as a sort of heavy burden, so to speak.' Petavius quotes to the same effect S. Epiphanius, S. Augustine, S. Chrysostom, and other Fathers." *Dublin Review*, April, 1876, p. 294.

† Although all early Christian writers conspicuous for their learning or antiquity, as *v. g.* Tertullian, Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Lactantius and Eusebius, are commonly called Holy Fathers, yet properly speaking, those only can claim the title who have been approved as such by the Church, and whom she has declared to be genuine and well-qualified witnesses, teachers, and judges, from their erudition and sanctity, of her doctrine as handed down to her from Christ and His Apostles. The other early authors are more properly called Christian or ecclesiastical writers.

must at the same time bear in mind that the Church has never on this account charged any Father, whom she has once thus approved, with heterodoxy, nor allowed others to do so.

In reading the Fathers, should one chance to come upon some doubtful or ambiguous statement in any of them, the general rule to be followed is, to explain his words as far as possible according to the common concordant sense of the other Fathers' teaching. But where a real discrepancy from the common teaching is discovered, it will be found on mature examination that such error has resulted from the obscurity of the subject-matter, on which nothing had as yet been defined,* or which had not been sufficiently thrashed out by more prolonged discussion. On verities that are fundamental no real discrepancy of this kind will have place.†

Whilst all revealed truths contained in the divine deposit had their place in the primitive Church, they may be said in a certain sense to have been for a time more or less held in solution. To use a perhaps too homely metaphor, the age of the earlier Fathers was the time of churning. By means of the agitation of heretics, and the doctrinal discussions of the Fathers, the several truths of faith were going through the process of coagulation, that so they might be shaped into dogmas and fixed in conciliary definitions. Formal dogmatic definitions were few at that date. Certain broad lines for general guidance were well known, such as Tertullian's rule of Prescription, and those principles that find their expression in the dicta of S. Augustine and S. Vincent of Lerins, "Securus judicat orbis terrarum," "Roma locuta est, causa finita est," "Quod semper, quod ubique, quod ab omnibus";

* "We must regard it," says Fr. Perrone, "as having happened, not without a special Providence, that very many (plurima) truths do but *lie hid* implexly and adumbratively in the revealed word: *viz.*, in order that the faithful might thence more feel the necessity of the Church's living and *infallible* magisterium." *Treatise on the definableness of the Immac. Conception of the B. V. M.* Part ii., ch. i.

† See Fessler, *Institutiones Patrologiæ. Ed. Jungmann.* Tom. i., pp. 35-47.

or again, what first paved the way for the condemnation of Nestorius, the voice of the *ecclesia discens*, at Constantinople, whereby the old adage, "Vox populi, vox Dei," is illustrative of the Faithful in the Catholic Church.

But principles such as these, however true, were too broad for immediate practical application to every difficult question that might arise, and hence some divergency of longer or shorter continuance on certain points that were afterwards definitely settled, was the inevitable result.

4. Another difficulty in the works of the early Fathers is, that many of them are held to be spurious and unauthentic, whilst the genuineness of others is disputed. I leave the discussion in all cases to the judgment of learned critics. My general rule has been to make my quotations from writings the authenticity of which is commonly acknowledged. Sometimes, however, I have cited works of doubtful genuineness, or which, at any rate, were not written as we now have them by the Fathers to whom they are attributed, but whose date, as assigned to them by critics, falls within the first six centuries, to which period I confine myself. When I quote from a doubtful or unauthentic work, or depart exceptionally from this general rule, I note the fact.

Some modern writers appear to treat such unauthentic works as of no value at all, and even as though their doubtfulness or spuriousness of itself formed a positive argument against doctrines and practices to the existence of which they bear testimony: whereas the truth is, that regarded simply as witnesses their evidence on these matters is of an authority equal to that of any genuine writings with which they are coeval. But besides this: it is held as highly probable by the learned, that many even of those treatises and sermons, which, from intrinsic evidence of language and style, criticism has justly decided to be certainly unauthentic, were yet substantially the utterances of the Fathers whose names they bear, and were composed in their present form by disciples or admiring auditors from notes or memory. In any case it would be very difficult to account for the early and general acceptance of such writings as genuine, unless

they really reflected and were in full accord with what was known to be the teaching of the Fathers who were credited with their authorship.

What has principally led me to compose this work is, because I had heard and read much of late years as to the very different view to be found in the writings of the early Fathers, regarding all that relates to the Blessed Virgin, from that which attaches to her in mediæval and modern times; and because I knew well how very difficult it is—as in the preceding pages I have been at pains to show—to give a true, clear, full, and impartial exposition of what those Fathers really taught regarding her, and of the veneration or devotion that was paid to her in their days. I determined therefore to examine in detail what they had written on this subject, and to render into English numerous extracts from their writings, that people generally might read the Fathers' own words, and then judge for themselves.

For myself, endeavouring to be as impartial as possible, I have formed the clear conviction, that, saving a very few differences on points of lesser moment, the Fathers of the first six centuries unanimously held Our Blessed Lady in the same high appreciation, as she has been held in by Catholics of all subsequent ages; and that everything that the Church has at any time defined or sanctioned with regard to her privileges and the honour that is her due—together with all that saints and theologians of mediæval and modern days have uttered in her praise—is to be found substantially, and at least in principle or germ, in the writings of the great Fathers and Doctors both of East and West, from the age of S. Justin the Martyr to that of S. Gregory the Great. Nay more, it will appear from passages which I quote from their writings, that many of the Fathers within that period were so explicit and profuse in their eulogies of the holy Mother of God, that they have left little for those who came after them to do, but to repeat their own words, and re-echo their praise.

It is to make this truth better known, and so to win some glory for the Virgin Mother, and to gain an increase of

devotion to her from English-speaking people, whether Catholic or otherwise, that I have undertaken the task of translating so many passages in testimony of her greatness from the writings of the earlier Greek and Latin Fathers. For whatever value may be attached to this work is due entirely to the numerous patristic extracts which it contains. It has not been my general aim in it to prove or expound the various points of Catholic doctrine regarding Our Lady, which form the subject-matter of the several Chapters; but rather simply to show what were the views and teachings of the Fathers on them, and to produce their own words in witness. Hence the quotations from the Fathers should be looked upon as the principal part of this work, and what I have written of my own as but accessory, and intended to indicate and explain the drift of the patristic passages gathered under the separate headings. This takes the form of short *Prolegomena*. A few exceptions are made to this rule, in cases where a particular subject seemed to me to demand a larger treatment. These are the Chapters on Mary the Second Eve, on Intercession and Invocation, and on Our Lady's Assumption. The Introductory Chapters on Doctrinal Development also appeared to me necessary, in order to form a right and adequate view of patristic teaching on the Blessed Virgin during so long a period as the first six centuries.

The passages are generally appended to their several Chapters in the Chronological order of the writers.* As many of them are of considerable length, and given with their full context, they will be sometimes found to contain, besides what is directly pertinent to the subject in hand, matters relating to the Blessed Virgin which more fitly belong to some other Chapter. This was unavoidable: for I often judged it better to present passages to the reader in their entirety, with their whole force and beauty, rather

* Except in the Chapter on Scriptural Exegesis, where in the Old Testament the Biblical order is kept, and in the New that of certain mysteries and events of Our Lord's Life. It will be observed that I have taken the term, *Exegesis*, in a very wide sense.

than in a curtailed and piecemeal form; and to refer to whatever was extraneous at the proper place.*

The edition which I have generally used is Migne's Patrologies. My rule has been to give a very literal rather than fluent rendering of the original. This may be thought to have been carried sometimes to excess. I have, however, been led to aim at literalness at the expense of elegance, from the danger I constantly feel there is, especially in cases where the Author's meaning is obscure, or his words admit of more senses than one,—and this is of frequent occurrence in the writings of the Fathers—lest a translator who aims much at fluency, should attach to a passage his own sense or colouring, and thus misrepresent the Author's mind, or at any rate deprive the reader of judging himself as to the signification of the original. In some few cases I have availed myself of others' translations.

With regard to the Syriac writings of S. Ephrem, I have followed implicitly the English translation of the Rev. J. B. Morris, and the Latin rendering of Canon Lamy. Whatever other extracts I have given from the Saint, that are not contained in their volumes, have been taken from the Roman edition published under Benedict XIV.

I have to acknowledge my obligation to several modern authors from whose works I have made copious extracts, and especially to learned writers in the *Dublin Review*, to whose articles on Development of doctrine and the Blessed Virgin I have sometimes been more indebted than appears from my direct quotations.

It will be seen that I have gathered in my pages not a few passages very similar to one another in sentiment and expression. This I have not done without design: since the very reiteration of the same praises of Mary from various parts of Christendom during so long a period is of itself a strong argument in favour of our general thesis, showing as

* In the Index at the end of the volume, reference is given under various headings to the pages where particular matters find mention throughout the work.

it does, that the Fathers of the first six centuries had in common but one and the same appreciation of the great Mother of God; and also what in the mind of the early Church, and in the devotion of the faithful, was the place of her, concerning whom such things were continually being written.

Though my collection is a large one, and by some may be deemed cumbersome and excessive, it is by no means exhaustive. I have passed over many pages in the Fathers, where it appeared to me that there was nothing new, and which had not been said elsewhere; and very probably several important, and perhaps well-known, passages have escaped my notice. Moreover the recent discoveries of manuscripts of long-lost works of the Fathers lead us to expect with hope that many more hidden treasures will ere long be brought again to light, and that thus plentiful gleanings still remain for a yet richer harvest to Our Lady's praise.

S. Joseph's, Teignmouth,
Feast of the Apostles SS. Peter and Paul, 1893,
The Day of the Solemn Renewal of England's
Dedication to the Blessed Virgin Mary, and to
S. Peter, Prince of the Apostles.

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INTRODUCTORY CHAPTERS ON DOCTRINAL DEVELOPMENT.

CHAPTER I.

GENERAL NOTIONS.

Accretive or Objective, and Non-Accretive or Subjective Development. Revealed Truths of the Substance of Faith, and Accessory to Its Substance. Explicit and Implicit Faith.

Theologians distinguish two kinds of doctrinal development*: the first, development *simply so called* (*simpliciter dictum*); the other, development *in a qualified or relative sense* (*secundum quid*). The first would have place, should a revelation be made of some truth that had not been before revealed, and consequently could not be believed except by means of this new revelation. The second would be, if some truth that had been before revealed, were, without any fresh revelation, more fully and distinctly explained and more clearly understood, so that what, from its having been previously revealed, was already of Divine faith *quoad se*, that is, regarded objectively in itself, should now come to be explicitly of faith *quoad nos*, that is to say, subjectively for us.† The first kind of development we may call *accretive*, or objective; the second, *non-accretive*, or subjective.

In the matter of Divine revelation we must, moreover, distinguish between those revealed truths which are said to belong to *the substance of faith*, and such as are termed *accessory* to, or connected with, its substance.

* "From defect of our language the word development is used both for the process of development and for the result."—Newman's *Development*, p. 41.

† Mazzella, *De Virtutibus Infusis*, p. 284.

To the substance of faith belong first of all the two articles called *general*, regarding the existence of God, and His providential care for man's salvation. In these two, as being the primary truths of faith, are, according to the teaching of S. Thomas,* implicitly contained all the other articles. For they are so contained, either by reason of the very nature of God, or by a positive act of His good pleasure. Thus all the articles on the Perfections of God, His Unity of Essence and Trinity of Persons are, by reason of the Divine Nature, contained in the truth of God's Existence and Being; and all the other revealed truths are, by a positive act of His good pleasure, contained in the article, that He has a providential care for man's salvation. Hence, whoever expressly believes as a truth of revelation in the existence of God, is held to believe implicitly that He is One in Essence and Three in Persons. In like manner he who expressly believes that God has a providential care for men, is held to believe implicitly in all those particular means, whereby He has of His own good pleasure decreed to lead man to salvation.

The mysteries of the Trinity, and Redemption through the Incarnate Word, are the two revealed articles called *particular*. These also belong to the substance of faith, though not in so strict a sense as the two general articles.

The other truths contained in the deposit of revelation are considered as *accessory* to the substance of faith and connected with it.

With regard to the two *general* articles, *viz.*, the existence of God, and His providential care for man's salvation, which belong to the substance of faith, the common teaching of theologians is, that faith in these truths was at all times from the beginning of the world precisely the same as it is now in the Christian Dispensation, and that an explicit belief of these two truths was always obligatory as a necessary means of salvation. For, since all men, from the beginning of the world, were destined for the same beatitude as ourselves, they all had necessarily to tend towards that beatitude by means of hope; but this they could not do, unless, in a true sense, they had, at least substantially, the self-same faith with us in God, and a like hope in Him, through belief in His promise of salvation.†

As to the two *particular* articles, also belonging to the

* 2. 2. q. 1. a. 7.

† *Heb.* xi. 1, 6, 13; 2 *Cor.* iv. 13.

substance of faith, theology teaches that belief in Divine Redemption was, in some sense, always the same. For the revelation of this mystery was contained in the promise made by God to our first parents, was handed down by tradition even amongst the Gentiles, and was from time to time renewed with more full explanation in the written Law and the Prophets. But as this truth was not so clearly revealed before the coming of Christ, we may hold that, whilst it was believed explicitly by the patriarchs and chief teachers of the Jews, it was, for the most part, but imperfectly apprehended and only implicitly believed by the mass of the Jewish people. The same may be said generally of the mystery of the Trinity.*

Of revealed truths *accessory* to the substance of faith, there was during the Old Testament Dispensation, from time to time an objective or accretive development; that is to say, certain truths were successively revealed, which either had no way been revealed before, or, at any rate, could not be explicitly believed by all without a new revelation.

The distinction between explicit and implicit faith is thus explained according to the teaching of Suarez: Anything is believed explicitly, when it is itself the object on which the assent of faith immediately and directly falls. What is implicitly believed is not itself the immediate object of the assent of faith, but is believed only indirectly and mediately, as being contained in something else which is the immediate and direct object of the assent of faith. What is thus implicitly believed is not itself actually known at all; since the intellect does not form any special concept of a proposition said to be implicitly believed, but of that other one alone in which it is contained.

Any difference there may be in explicit faith is only one of degree. Thus it may be more or less explicit, according as the concept of a mystery is more or less clearly and perfectly formed; or, again, so far as the points known about the truth believed are many or few. But rightly considered, the difference consists in the greater or less number of actual assents, whereby the several truths belonging to one and the same mystery and article of faith are explicitly and directly believed. Or should the more or less clearness of conception be with regard to but one single integral truth, the difference then lies rather in the apprehension of the truth than in the actual assent of faith. And this clearer

* Suarez, *Disp.* ii. Sect. vi. 7, 11; De Lugo, *Disp.* xii. n. 87.

apprehension may be due to human industry, *viz.*, be the result of knowledge acquired by more scientific study, wider learning, and a better understanding.

The other mode of believing, that is to say, by implicit faith, is based on various principles. First, by reason of an explicit belief of one revealed truth others are said to be believed implicitly on account of the formal object of faith, namely, the veracity of God who reveals; whereby all the truths of revelation are so connected together that it is impossible for any one to believe one article because God has revealed it, without being at once prepared to believe all other articles of His revelation when they are sufficiently proposed. And this is to believe implicitly. Whereas to deny one article of faith is implicitly to deny all, because we cannot give the adhesion of faith to the rest should we withhold it from one. Just as whoever detests one sin for God's sake, must virtually and implicitly detest all.

Secondly, a man may believe with implicit faith from his relation to others who believe explicitly. It is in this way the simple faithful are said to believe all things that the Church believes, or the Apostles taught, though they do not know actually what all these things are.

Thirdly, there may be this implicit faith by reason of some truth that is believed explicitly, and that in many ways. For example, because one proposition is contained in some other, as a conclusion in a principle from which it may be evidently drawn. Thus, he who believes that Christ is man, believes implicitly that He is visible. Or, because one proposition is connected with another in reality, or by actual identity, even though such connection cannot be known without faith. Thus he who believes that God is infinite, believes implicitly that He is Three in Persons. Or again, the particular is known in the universal, as is self-evident. And lastly, the circumstances of a revealed mystery are said to be known implicitly in its substance. Thus he who believes that Christ is the Redeemer of the world, believes implicitly that He died for the salvation of men. And such like.*

* Suarez, *Disp.* ii. sect. vi. n. 2.

CHAPTER II.

DOCTRINAL DEVELOPMENT (*Continued*).

THE CHRISTIAN REVELATION WAS GIVEN ONCE FOR ALL TO THE APOSTLES EXCLUSIVELY. ALL SUBSEQUENT DEVELOPMENTS ARE NON-ACCRETIVE, AND CONTAINED IN THE ORIGINAL DEPOSIT.

THE Christian religion is in the strictest and most exclusive sense a Divine revelation, whereby—when in the fulness of time the Incarnate Word appeared—all the former revelations, which had been more or less partial and obscure, were made clear and perfected. So great was the flood of light poured forth by the preaching of the Gospel on the mysteries of the Holy Trinity and the Redemption of mankind through Jesus Christ, that it was as though these truths were then first revealed. Hence S. Gregory says, that "whereas under the Old Testament the mystery of the Trinity was unknown explicitly save to the more spiritual Fathers, and was hidden from the Jewish people generally; now under the New Testament the faith of the Trinity has grown up in the hearts of all the faithful, and all the nations are taught to believe in the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost, in whose Name they are baptised." And in regard to the mystery of Redemption, S. Paul could speak of it as *the mystery of Christ in other generations not known to the sons of men, as it was now revealed to His holy Apostles and Prophets in the Spirit.**

Besides this fuller revelation of the Trinity and the Incarnation—mysteries which are of the substance of the faith—there were brought to light with the New Dispensation many other truths accessory to the substance of faith, which had not been before revealed, relating especially to the Church of Christ and His law of grace.

The revelation of the whole body of Christian mysteries was

* *Ephes.* iii. 5, 7.

made to the Apostles exclusively. To them it was delivered immediately by our Lord Himself, and by the illumination of the Holy Ghost, once for all, full and complete. With them it was closed.

The Apostles were commissioned by Jesus Christ to make known this revelation to the Church, and were at the same time empowered, by means of Divine inspiration, to set forth to others, in due expression and adequate statement, the heavenly truths which they had received. This entire body of revealed doctrine they deposited in the Church. Upon their successors in the office of teaching, who constituted the *Ecclesia docens*, devolved the duty of transmitting the Apostolic doctrine in its integrity and purity to those who should come after in every generation. To do this work effectually, they were given that special guidance and assistance of the Holy Ghost, which had been promised to them by Christ to continue in His Church until the end of time.

It hence follows that the doctrinal teaching of the Catholic Church is always substantially identical with that of the Apostles. In other words, whatever articles the Church has at any time since defined to be of faith by Councils or otherwise, are but developments of truths revealed once for all to the Apostles and by them delivered to her keeping. Such developments, moreover, are made in the sense in which the Apostles themselves held the truths. For no subsequent doctrinal development of the Church is *accretive* to the original deposit.*

This conclusion holds good not only for all the successive definitions of faith, but also for all such doctrines and devotions as are taught and sanctioned by the Church through her ordinary Magisterium. Indeed, the very fact that a doctrine has been at any time held universally with the sanction of the Church, is of itself a proof, not only that such doctrine is infallibly true, but

* The following from Endell Tyler shows how ill Protestants generally understand, and consequently misrepresent the teaching of Catholics on doctrinal development: "The Almighty, they [Catholics] allege, did not impart to mankind the whole truth in all its fulness at the first preaching of the Gospel, but bequeathed to His Church the privilege of deriving from Him and communicating to the world successive revelations of essential doctrine. Consequently (they proceed to argue), it is not enough to show that a tenet is not found in Scripture, nor even in the early Church, to warrant its rejection. It may, they say, have pleased God to reveal it in His own good time, and of the reality of that revelation the Church is the only judge: from her there is no appeal."—*The Worship of the B.V.M. in the Church of Rome*, etc., Introduction, p. xvi.

also in full accord with Apostolic teaching. Since, otherwise, the promise of Christ would be found to have failed, and the gates of hell be shown to have prevailed against His Church.

It is the special office of the Church, as a Divine teacher, to continually unfold, develop and illustrate (*explicare, evolvere* *) the doctrines contained in the deposit of revelation which she has received from Christ. This she does especially in her Councils by her definitions of faith. In these definitions the Church does not propose to the faithful any new truths, but—guided by the infallible assistance of the Holy Ghost—recalls more distinctly to their remembrance, and more fully explains certain portions of the original deposit. Hence it happens from time to time that certain truths which, because revealed, were always of faith, objectively, or regarded in themselves, being *de fide quoad se*, become subjectively, through the Church's definition and proposition, formal dogmas of Catholic faith—*de fide quoad nos*—and as such claim the belief of all Christians. In other words: certain truths—which, as forming part of the revealed deposit, and consequently of the integral Christian faith revealed to the Apostles—were always believed implicitly by the faithful, come in course of time to be believed by them *explicitly*.

The following quotation from a writer in the *Dublin Review* will serve to illustrate the matter treated of in this Chapter.

"All subsequent definitions of faith are simply the unravelling of matter given by the Apostles. Their state of mind was quite different from that of their successors. Theirs was what we may call inspiration; after them the teachers of the Church had only that special guidance of the Holy Spirit which was promised them by Christ. The Apostolic teaching, then, was not only the first link in a chain; it was that out of which all developments came, and in which all were implicitly contained. Hence it seems to follow that the Apostles must have had especially in their minds all the future definitions of faith, though not, of course, necessarily in the same terms. They must have so framed their teaching that it was capable of all subsequent developments. . . . Thus if the Immaculate Conception of Our Blessed Lady was a part of the original deposit given by Christ to His Apostles, it must have been clearly before the intellect of Peter. Furthermore, since there has been no subsequent revelation to the Church, that truth must have been transmitted to their successors at least in such a shape that without any extraordinary spiritual interposition it can be extracted from the propositions left with them. Besides this, these propositions must have in some way reached the understanding of the teaching body of the Church. In other words, the truth must have been really contained in the explicit teaching of the Apostles, and have

* See the Bulls of Pius IX., *Ineffabilis* and *Æterni Patris*.

been really known by their successors at least implicitly. All this seems to flow from the very primary notion of Christianity as a revelation given once for all." *

APPENDIX.

Protestants, when controverting the doctrinal developments of the Catholic Church, are used to set much store by the well-known aphorism, *Quod ubique, quod semper, quod ab omnibus.* In order to show how ill this saying is often understood, and how much it is misapplied, we think it well to quote at some length from the *Commonitorium* of S. Vincent of Lerins in which it occurs, and thus let the Saint himself explain the meaning of his own words. We would first, however, say something about the author, the scope of his work, and the circumstances under which it was written.†

S. Vincent of Lerins was a monk and a simple priest who lived during the fifth century. After being engaged, as it appears, in the military service, he retired into a monastery, and devoted himself entirely to piety and the study of Divine things. He wrote his *Commonitorium*, not indeed with the view of laying down rules for the teaching body of the Church to follow when pronouncing decisions in matters of faith or morals, but for the security of *his own faith*, by recalling and having at hand the admonitions of holy men as to how *private individuals and the simple faithful* should behave in presence of prevalent heresies. The following are S. Vincent's own words:—

"It is enough for me, in order to help my memory or rather my forgetfulness, to have gathered together the *Commonitory*, which however, by calling to mind what in past time I have learned, I will endeavour with God's grace daily to correct and make more perfect. And this I have thought good to premise, that should this work of mine chance to get abroad and fall into the hands of holy persons, they may not over-hastily find fault with what they see in it, and which I promise ere long with later correction to amend and improve." ‡

S. Vincent's object was to enable himself a simple monk, to discern the truth from the false teaching of heretics, on points about which no decree of a General Council could be found. Only three General Councils had been held up to that time; the first at Nicæa in 325, the second at Constantinople in 381, and the third at Ephesus in 431. And these Councils had not intended to declare in detail all that had been revealed, but only to affirm certain truths against contemporary heretics. He thus continues:—

"Whilst often making very earnest and diligent inquiries of many excellent, holy, and learned men, as to how and by what means I might securely—and by some, so to say, general and normal way—discern the truth of Catholic faith from the falsity of heretical pravity, I usually received this answer from them all, *viz.*, that if I or any one else wished to find out the deceits of the

* *The Dublin Review*, Jan. 1869.

† See *Change in Faith, or Development. A Critical Exposition of S. Vincent of Lerins's, Quod ubique, quod semper, quod ab omnibus*, by C. Tondini de Quarengi, Barnabite. London, Hodges, 1881. From which we have here made some extracts.

‡ *Patr. Lat.* tom. 50, p. 639.

heretics who were daily springing up, escape their snares, and remain safe and sound in the true faith, one must, with God's assistance, defend and preserve his faith in a twofold manner: first, by the authority of the Divine law, and secondly by the tradition of the Catholic Church. . . . But since by reason of the very profundity of Holy Scripture, all do not understand it in one and the same sense, but divers men diversely; one interpreting the same words this way, and another that; so that, to one's thinking, so many men, so many opinions may be gathered from it. . . . Consequently it is of all importance, in order not to be led away into the windings of every sort of error, to hold fast to the line of scriptural interpretation that is according to the rule of the ecclesiastical and Catholic sense. Within the Catholic Church itself, too, we should take great care to hold that which has been believed everywhere, and always, and by all (*quod ubique, quod semper, quod ab omnibus creditum est*). For this is really and properly Catholic, as the very meaning of the words and reason show, and in a general way comprises everything. This, too, will be in fact the case, if we follow universality, antiquity, and common consent. Universality, then, we shall follow, if we confess that one faith as true, which the whole Church throughout the world confesses; Antiquity, if in no way we depart from those sentiments which it is manifest our holy elders and Fathers held and generally approved (*celebrasse*); Common consent, in fine, if we follow what were in antiquity the definitions and judgments (*sententias*) of all, or, at any rate, nearly all the priests and teachers alike." *

Later on, in his *Second Commonitory*, he says:—

"We have to pay most earnest heed to two things, unto which all those that will not be heretics, must of necessity cling fast. The first is to see what has been decreed in old time by all the priests of the Catholic Church with authority of a General Council. And secondly, should some new question arise, about which no decree is to be found, we must then have recourse to the judgments of the Holy Fathers," etc.†

Hence we see that S. Vincent when in doubt whether doctrines, not yet defined by the Church, were Catholic or not, made it his rule to consult the writings of the Fathers. If he found from their testimony that a certain doctrine had been believed in the Church *ubique*, that is, by faithful living in all parts of Christendom; *semper*, that is, from the Apostles' days to his own time; *ab omnibus*, that is, by all those generally who were regarded as sound Catholics, or rather, what was held by the great majority of bishops and doctors, he at once concluded that such a doctrine was undoubtedly a genuine doctrine of Christian revelation, since it had been believed everywhere, always, and by all.

But because all doctrines that have been believed, *ubique, semper, et ab omnibus*, are undoubtedly genuine Christian doctrines, it by no means follows that these are *the only* genuine Christian doctrines; nor, as we shall see, did S. Vincent himself thus conclude.

Moreover, he goes on to qualify this general and ordinary rule (*quasi generalis et regularis via*) that he had laid down. He supposes the case of heresy infecting not only some portion of the Church, but going about to corrupt the whole Church altogether; and of our seeing in antiquity that individual teachers, cities, and provinces have fallen into error. Here, he says, we must adhere to what the universal Church has in Council decreed.

* *Ib.* ii. p. 649. † ii. 29, p. 677.

"But," he asks, "what are we to do when it is some doctrine about which no such decree can be found? Then pains should be taken to consult and inquire as to what were the judgments and tenets, after collating them together, of the Fathers (*Majorum*), but of those only who, in different times and places, persevering in the communion and faith of the one Catholic Church, were regarded as approved teachers (*Magistri probabiles extiterunt*): and then whatever, we find, not one or two only, but all of them alike, with one and the same consent, openly, frequently, perseveringly, held and taught, this same we are to understand is to be believed by ourselves also without any further doubting."

S. Vincent then goes on to speak of the prevalence of the Donatist Schism in Africa, and of Arianism usurping the very place almost of the Catholic Church herself throughout Christendom, so that "the minds of nearly all the bishops of the Latin tongue were shrouded in darkness": and describes the action of those bishops who most manfully opposed the widespread heresy, as "restoring nearly the whole entire world from a new perfidy to the ancient faith, from the madness of novelty to ancient soundness, from the blindness of novelty to the ancient light." He then recalls how, in a more remote age, "Agrippinus, Bishop of Carthage, of venerable memory," and even "the most blessed Cyprian, that light of all saints, bishops, and martyrs," sanctioned the sacrilegious practice of re-baptising heretics, and thus gave occasion to Catholics of falling into error.

"So great," he says, "was the ability and force of argument with which the heresy was supported, so powerful the eloquence, so large the number of its advocates, such its plausibility and appearance of truth, so many the passages of Holy Writ cited in its behalf—though clearly interpreted in a new and wrong sense"—that for himself he does not think the plot (*conspiratio*) could have been put down in any other way than by denouncing it with being a novelty. "And this," says S. Vincent, "Pope Stephen, the Bishop of the Apostolic See, most effectually did by the decree, *Nihil novandum, nisi quod traditum est*, contained in the Epistle which he sent to Africa. For, whilst taking counsel with his colleagues, the Pope felt himself bound as much to surpass all the other bishops in devotion to the faith, as he was above them all by the authority of his place." *

Here there was no General Council to define, and yet S. Vincent evidently looks upon the judgment of S. Stephen as final, and deciding what was the Catholic truth to be believed on the question at issue.

He speaks of the subsequent—

"African Council with its decree, as, God so granting it, being of no force, and the whole matter become in the end as though a dream, or a tale that is told, superfluous, done away, antiquated, trodden under foot."

In summing up what was done for the condemnation of Nestorianism, S. Vincent marks out the authority of the Roman Pontiff in the following words:—

"All which things, though they were abundant for the overthrow and extinguishing of all the profane novelties, yet, lest aught should be lacking to such fulness, we add for a conclusion a twofold authority of the Apostolic See, the one of the holy Pope Sixtus, the venerable man who now adorns the

* *Ib.* 4-6, pp. 641-646.

Roman Church; the other of his predecessor of blessed memory, Pope Celestine, which we have thought necessary here to insert." *

Thus we see that, according to the teaching of S. Vincent, a doctrine may be thoroughly Catholic, and yet may not in every case (as that of not re-baptising heretics) have been held *ubique, et ab omnibus.*

But there remains the word *semper*. Those who hold to the interpretation and application of S. Vincent's rule, as it is commonly understood by non-Catholics, would maintain that all genuine doctrines of Christianity, originally contained in the revealed deposit, were believed in the same manner, that is to say, explicitly, at any rate, more or less so, in every age of Christianity from the beginning, at least by some few, and somewhere in the Church.

We would now, then, show that S. Vincent held that the teaching and belief of Christian doctrines was not always the same; or, in other words, that alongside of the principle, *quod ubique, quod semper, quod ab omnibus*, there was, according to the Saint, a process of doctrinal development in the Church, whereby additions were made to Catholic teaching, and certain Christian truths that at one time had been believed only implicitly came in course of time to be believed explicitly.

For this purpose we shall simply give a lengthened quotation from the *Commonitorium*, thus leaving S. Vincent to explain his teaching on the matter in his own words :—

"*O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding the profane novelties of words.* . . .† Who at this day is Timothy, but either generally the universal Church, or especially the whole body of prelates, who ought either themselves to have a sound knowledge of Divine religion, or who ought to infuse it into others? . . . *Depositum custodi.* What is the *depositum?* It is that which has been entrusted to thee, not what has been found out by thee: what thou hast received, not what thou hast thought out; a matter not of ingenuity, but of learning; not of private adoption, but of public tradition; a thing brought to thee, not brought out by thee: wherein thou must be not an author, but a keeper, not an originator, but a pursuer: not leading, but following. *Keep*, he says, *the deposit:* preserve the talent of the Catholic faith inviolate and pure. Let what has been entrusted to thee remain with thee, be delivered by thee. Thou hast received gold, give back gold. I will not that thou offer me one thing for another, and have the face, instead of gold, to present me with lead, or cheat me with brass. I want not the appearance of gold, but its reality (*naturam*)."

"O Timothy, O priest, O steward, O doctor, if the Divine gift has rendered thee fit, by thy wit, thy travail, thy doctrine—be the Beseleel of the spiritual tabernacle, engrave the precious gems of Divine dogma, faithfully set them, wisely adorn them, give them brightness, grace, and beauty. Make what was before believed more obscurely, by thy exposition, to be more clearly understood. Let posterity rejoice for coming to the intelligence of that, by thy means, which antiquity, without understanding it, had in veneration. Nevertheless, the things thou hast learned, the same teach in such sort, that albeit thou speakest after a new manner, thou speak not new things.

"But some one will perhaps say: Is there then no progress of religion in Christ's Church? Surely there is: yea, let us have progress even the greatest.

* *Ib.* 32, p. 683. † 1 *Tim.* vi. 20.

For who would be so envious to men, so hateful to God, as to seek to hinder it? But yet of such sort it should be, as to be in good truth a progress of the faith, not a change thereof. It is of the nature of progress that the particular thing should itself be amplified, but of change that something should be turned from one thing into another. Therefore, the understanding, the science, the wisdom ought to increase, and make much and strenuous progress, as well of every man in particular as of all in common, as well in the successive stages of a man's life, as in the various ages and times of the whole Church; but yet, for all that, only in its own kind and nature, that is to say, in the same doctrines, in the same sense, in the same judgment. Here let the religion of our souls imitate the way of our bodies, which, although as years go by they develop and unfold their proportions, yet remain the same that they were. There is a great difference betwixt the flower of youth and the ripeness of age, yet the self-same men become old who once were young, so that although the state and condition of one and the self-same man be altered, yet one and the self-same nature, one and the self-same person still remain. Small are the limbs of infants, great of young men, yet they are the same. So many joints as young children have, so many have they when they are men: and if there are any parts that put forth in course of more mature age, these were already planted after the manner of seed, so that nothing in old men afterwards comes forth new, which did not already lie hid in them before, when they were children.

"In like manner also it befits the doctrine of the Christian religion to follow these rules of progress, so that it may thus be consolidated in course of years, developed by time, ennobled (*sublimatur*) by age, and still persevere incorrupt and pure; and in all the proportions of its several parts, and, so to say, in all its particular limbs and senses become full and perfect; and this without admitting aught of alteration, or sustaining any loss of what essentially belongs to it (*nulla proprietatis dispendia*), or any variation of definition.

"For example: our fathers sowed of old in the Church's field the seeds of wheaten faith; very unjust and improper would it be, that we, their descendants, instead of the genuine truth of wheat, should gather the counterfeit error of cockle. This rather is right and reasonable, that, without discrepancy between the first and the last, from the successive growths of the original wheat, we also should reap a harvest of wheaten doctrine; so that whilst there is some evolution in course of time from those first seminal principles (*cum aliquid ex illis seminum primordiis accessu temporis evolvatur*), and it is now fertilised and improved, yet nothing be changed from the nature of the germ: though there be added outward shape and appearance (species), form, distinction, yet the nature of each kind remain still the same. For God forbid that the rose-gardens of Catholic sense should be turned to thistles and thorns. God forbid, I say, that in this spiritual paradise, from shoots of cinnamon and balsam, should suddenly sprout forth darnel and wolf's-bane. Whatever then has been sown in the Church, the husbandry of God, by the faith of our fathers, let this same flourish and ripen, let this same make progress and be brought to perfection. For right it is that those pristine doctrines of heavenly philosophy should in process of time be worked up, finished, and polished; but it is most wrong that they should be changed about, most wrong that they should be maimed and mutilated. Let them, by all means, receive evidence, light, distinction, but they must keep their fulness, integrity, and what naturally belongs to them. . . .

"But the Church of Christ, a careful and wary keeper of the doctrines committed to her charge, never changes anything in them, diminishes nothing, adds nothing: what is necessary she takes not away, what is superfluous she puts not on, loses not her own, usurps not what belongs to others; but with all industry, takes pains about this one thing alone, *viz.*, that by faithful and prudent handling of what is old—should there be some things of old time rough-cast and inchoate (*si qua sunt illa antiquitus informata et inchoata*), she may bestow care on, and polish them; if things are already expressed and enucleated, she may consolidate and strengthen them; if they are already confirmed and defined, she may guard them.

"What else, in fact, has the Church laboured for by the decrees of Councils, but that what before was simply believed, should later on be more carefully believed, that what was before more sluggishly preached, should later on be preached with greater instance; that what was before reverenced with too much unconcern, might later on be reverenced with more solicitude? This, I say, and nought else but this, has the Church, when stirred up by the novelties of heretics, effected through the decrees of Councils, namely, that what she had before received from those of old (*a majoribus*) by tradition alone, the same she has consigned, for those who came afterwards, in written forms also (*etiam per scripturæ chirographum*), thus comprising a large sum of matters in few words of writing, and, for the most part, on account of the clearer light in which the doctrine was now understood, designating it—though in no new sense of faith—by a specific and new appellation (*et plerumque propter intelligentiæ lucem, non novum fidei sensum novæ appellationis proprietate signando*)." *

"Development of Doctrine."

"If he (Tindale) will say that sometimes the doctors which we call holy saints have not agreed in one, but some have sometimes thought in some one thing otherwise than others have done, then his saying is nothing to the purpose. For God doth reveal His truths not always in one manner, but sometimes He showeth it out at once, as He will have it known, and men bound forthwith to believe it, as He showed Moses what He would have Pharao do. Sometimes He showeth it leisurely, suffering His flock to commune and dispute thereon, and in their treating of the matter suffereth them with good mind, and Scripture, and natural wisdom, with invocation of His spiritual help, to search and seek for the truth, and to vary for the while in their opinions, till that He reward their virtuous diligence with leading them secretly into the consent and concord, and belief of the truth by His Holy Spirit, *qui facit unanimes in domo* (*Ps.* lxvii. 7), 'which maketh His flocks in one mind in His House, that is, to wit, His Church.' So that in the meantime the variance is without sin, and maketh nothing against the evidence of the Church, except Tindale will say that he will neither believe S. Peter nor S. Paul in anything that they teach, because that once they varied in the manner of their doctrine as appeareth (*Gal.* ii. 11-14)." †

* Of this the terms *Consubstantialis*, *Theotokos*, *Transubstantiatio*, are examples.—*Common.* ii., *Ib.*

† Blessed Thomas More, *Confutation of Tindale*, Works 456. *Wisdom and Wit*, p. 108, by Rev. T. E. Bridgett, C.SS.R., Burns and Oates, 1892

CHAPTER III.

DOCTRINAL DEVELOPMENT (*Continued*).

Causes of Development of Christian Doctrine in the Church.

We saw in the last chapter that the entire revelation of Christian doctrine was given once for all exclusively to the Apostles, and by them deposited in the Church, which was constituted by Christ to be for all time the sure guardian and infallible organ of Divine truth. It hence follows that the theology of the Catholic Church must be ever substantially the same as that of the Apostles. Consequently in the Church's progressive teaching no development can have place that is what we termed objective, or accretive to Apostolic doctrine; but whatever development is discoverable must be such only as is subjective and non-accretive to the original deposit. Development of this latter sort there has certainly been both in Christian doctrine and worship. This is plain to every one who reads the page of the Church's history during her well-nigh nineteen centuries of existence. Development in this sense is, indeed, so prominently marked, as to appear to many who look only on the surface, as though it were a real change and variation from the original type. Thus we know that certain doctrines now stand in a very different relation as regards the faithful from that which they once held; so that what were formerly considered to be matters of theological opinion, and more or less open to discussion, have been since defined to be revealed articles of Catholic faith. Doctrines and religious practices, moreover, which, so far at least as extant ancient records bear witness, were but little noticed or entirely unknown in earlier times, have, under new aspects, been since brought into prominence with large expansion, and, having obtained fresh motives and sanctions, are now universally embraced by the people's faith and devotion.

The fact, then, of such doctrinal development being conceded, the question arises: How is it to be accounted for? What are its causes? Why, in other words, should there have been any such development at all? Why, rather, should not the exhibition of Christian doctrine and devotion have appeared uniformly one and the same at all times from the beginning?

Many reasons might be adduced to account, in part at least, for a certain reserve during the first centuries of Christianity, and also for a subsequent corresponding development in religious teaching. Of these we shall notice what appear to us to be the principal.

1. There was in primitive times what was called *the discipline of the secret* (*disciplina arcani*), whereby, especially for the sake of reverence, a reserve was practised in the public teaching of the faith, and certain portions of the Church's system were held back, lest by their publicity holy things should be profaned by the heathen, and catechumens be prematurely initiated in the more sacred Christian mysteries. This reserve, as time went on, became neither useful nor practicable; and hence the Christian religion showed itself later on in a more developed form.*

2. It was simply impossible to explain fully and set forth in detail the whole circle of revealed truths all at once from the beginning. Considerable time was necessary for such exhibition. The Apostles and those who succeeded them, from an unwillingness to overburden new converts, would in their preaching and instruction propose and insist upon those truths first of all which were most essential, as belonging to the substance of the Christian faith, and most important for practice; whilst they would touch lightly on accessory truths as being less necessary to be explicitly known, or would hold them in reserve for some more favourable

* "There was a time when Christians only, and not even catechumens, knew what is present on our altars. By degrees, heretics also knew what the Church believed thereon. Now any rationalist philosopher can tell you what is believed by a Catholic when he talks of the Real Presence. Here an order is observed: God taught His Church from the first, what at the last all the world has come to know. God let the awful secret escape, so to speak, by degrees. First, men dreamt a child was slaughtered in the rites of Christians; by degrees they knew something more was there, and of a more mysterious kind; now all men know that we believe that the Flesh and Blood and Soul of God the Son is present on our altars. In a similar way, the body of her from whom He took that flesh was first thought to have been defiled by adultery; then she was thought to have fallen as low as to have other children after God; then she was proclaimed Mother of God; then other titles of honour came before the world; and now heretics and heathens can learn, that we claim for the soul and body of Mary absolute immunity from sin."—J. B. Morris, *Jesus, the Son of Mary*, vol. ii. p. 365, 1851.

occasion. They would on the other hand, where special circumstances required it, dwell on certain secondary points of doctrine with greater stress and more at length than their intrinsic importance might seem to demand.

3. We must hold that wherever the Apostles preached, they instructed their converts sufficiently in the faith by their oral teaching, and left an adequate deposit of Christian doctrine in the several churches they founded. Still, we can see from S. Paul's Epistles how much had remained to be supplemented, and how the implicit teaching that he had imparted on various points of doctrine needed to be afterwards explained and further developed. The Apostle is frequently led to dwell in his Epistles upon certain matters which the circumstances of those to whom he wrote made it more needful to explain. He solves their objections and difficulties, and answers the questions they had raised. But how many more inquiries might they not have proposed had their doctrinal investigation been more extended, and their theological science more profound. And how many other things might he not have said by way of more fully explaining those revealed truths which he had taught them less explicitly in his oral instructions. Now this is precisely what the Church has been continually doing by her definitions of faith, the teaching of her doctors and theologians, and through her ordinary Magisterium.

We should hold that the Apostles had the fullest knowledge both extensively and intensively of Christian truth. No theologian to the end of time will ever know more than they did. To affirm that any in after time could have a more explicit faith than the Apostles, would, as Suarez teaches, be temerarious.*

4. We should bear in mind that Christianity is not some abstract philosophy, the truth of which may be passively accepted by a merely intellectual assent; but that its doctrines—even those accounted the more speculative—become, when appro-

* *Disp.* ii. sect. vi. 13: "The Apostles' apprehension of doctrine was keener, more definite, more precise, than any which human words can possibly convey; it was the Holy Ghost's direct impress on their intellect and their heart. They expressed it, however, in words, as best it could be expressed. . . . In communicating the doctrine to their immediate disciples, they would (as all good teachers do) pay special attention to the antecedents, circumstances, acquirements and temperament of those disciples. It is one question, what form of words *is in itself* the more appropriate, the less inadequate, to convey some sacred idea; it is quite another question, what words would most effectively convey it *to this or that particular* disciple or body of disciples."—*Dublin Review*, October, 1865, p. 341.

priated by the mind and heart, principles of moral energy, and a vital force, which entering into all manner of human action have power to influence man's will and direct his conduct, not only personally as an individual, but also in all his relations, domestic, social, and political.* The Christian religion is, moreover, intended for the whole world, to be universal as to place and time, and is hence capable of application to all mankind under every variety of circumstance and condition, whether of age, country, or civilisation; and this variety is to go on increasing and multiplying until the end of time. Hence Christianity will, in a manner, appear outwardly diverse, as it is viewed under different aspects, and seen clothed with various accidental forms. But, in truth, "it changes with them in order to remain the same." Whatever change there may be, is not of Christianity itself, but one of appearance only, through the application of its original doctrines and principles to new cases. Development here there is, but it is not accretive.

We might, indeed, allow that there is here an accretive development in such sense, that the fresh cases and new circumstances for application must first achieve their actual existence, and be brought into direct contact with the doctrines and principles of Christianity, before these can be really operative, and attain their natural result. In order to test the force and extension of any great principle—that it may have fair play, and show its normal development—it must have an adequate sphere for its operation, together with such events and circumstances in the passage of time as shall call it into proper action, and duly test its power. Thus the Primacy conferred by Christ upon S. Peter and his successors was unable to attain its normal exercise, nor could the fulness and extent of its power be adequately gauged and verified in the life-time of the prince of the Apostles, or under the Popes during the age of persecution. To show itself normally, and in full development, it needed for its exercise a field of operation in some way proportioned to its universal jurisdiction, where it might bear influence on the world at large, and measure its supernatural force with human opposition of every kind, whether arising from the jealousy of secular Christian princes,

* See Newman's *Development*, pp. 36, 40: "Doctrines expand variously according to the mind, individual or social into which they are received; and the peculiarities of the recipient are the regulating power, the law, the organisation, or, as it may be called, the form of their development. The life of doctrines may be said to consist in the law or principle which they embody" (p. 178).

the rivalry of ambitious prelates, the wily deceits of heresy and false philosophy, or the resistance of disobedient Catholics.

5. There is order in all things that exist. This principle holds good for the supernatural mysteries of revelation, as well as for the truths that fall naturally within the range of human reason. For any series of objective verities to become subjective truth to us, that is to say, that they may be adequately apprehended by the intelligence, assimilated to the mind, and recognised by us as true, due order must be observed in their proposition, conception, and discussion. What is of a prior order will claim to be proposed, accepted, weighed, analysed, and settled, before what comes after in order. Hence certain truths and principles must appear first in the field, to be worked out in their details, and verified in their results, before others. They will consequently be seen in full development earlier than others. For as in objective truths themselves there is a gradation of ontological order, so also in the subjective process of their intellectual development, and of their outward manifestation, there is a subordination of logical sequence.

This principle is strikingly exemplified by the history of doctrinal development in the Catholic Church. Thus the controversies and dogmatic definitions, which stand out first and most prominently in the early centuries of Christianity, are such as bear upon the primary truths of the origin and nature of good and evil, Creation, the Nature of God, His Trinity in Unity, the Eternal Godhead and twofold Nature of the Incarnate Word, the Divine Personality of the Holy Ghost, and the grace of Redemption. These primary mysteries were the first to receive explicit development. Many other revealed truths, accessory to the Faith, had long to bide their time for their more full elucidation: and, meanwhile, their teaching remained more or less implicit. Amongst these was the Church's complete doctrinal teaching concerning the Blessed Virgin Mary.

6. But quite apart from this intrinsic principle of order, there were also extrinsic reasons why the first teachers of Christianity had to use reserve in setting forth certain doctrines and practices, which, later on, were explicitly taught, and universally sanctioned by the Church.

We mean: there were some points of the New Testament revelation, which—relatively to the circumstances of those to whom the faith was preached in the first ages of the Church—it did not consist with Christian prudence, to bring all at once into

prominence, and to insist upon explicitly in detail everywhere, and at all times. These were, of course, truths accessory to the faith, and not such as belonged to its substance. Amongst them were especially, certain doctrinal results and practical consequences flowing from the whole mystery of the Incarnation, and the glorified Humanity of the Eternal Word: for example, the dignity and prerogatives of Mary, His ever-Virgin Mother; the honour and devotion due to her, to the Angels and Saints; the power of their intercession; the practice of venerating and invoking them; the religious use of images and pictures representing the Word Incarnate, and the Saints in glory.

Here we should take into account the gross ideas and materialistic habits of thought with regard to all things religious that were everywhere prevalent, and which must have had a strong hold on those to whom the Gospel was first preached. Heathen mythology, idolatry, the worship of heroes and demigods, sceptical philosophy, sensual literature, and general corruption of morals, all combined to foster this depraved state of thought. Evidently, then, the first duty and work of the Christian teacher was to disenthral souls from their mental bondage, to purify, enlighten, refine, and elevate their spiritual sense, by indoctrinating them first of all with the supernaturalness, and distinctive spirituality of the Christian Faith. All the world, at that period needed to be converted from its degraded notions of the divinity into which it had sunk, to the idea of the One true God; as self-existing from eternity, of an infinitely glorious nature and being—a pure Spirit, incorporeal, absolutely perfect, All Holy, Almighty, All-wise, All-good, the Creator, Sustainer, and Sovereign Lord of all things visible and invisible; the Source and Reason of all created being, goodness, beauty and truth; the Supreme Lord, most just Lawgiver, Judge and Recompenser of all men, and also their most Merciful Father, their Last End, and All-sufficient Saviour.

We should also bear in mind that the early converts to Christianity were still surrounded by their former co-religionists, on the one hand, Jews, inheriting all the exclusive traditions of their race and nation; Gentiles, on the other, cleaving to their Pagan superstitions: and that it was from these two elements alike fresh accessions to the Faith were hoped to be made.

If, then, it was a duty of charity to consult largely the prejudices of those who had always been accustomed to the restrictive enactments of the Mosaic law, as we know the Apostles did, it was none the less clearly incumbent upon all those who were

responsible for preserving untainted the religion of Jesus Christ, to guard it from the risk of any admixture of the anthropomorphic tendencies so rife in the ancient Pagan world. Hence, obviously, it would not have been consistent with Christian prudence to set forth very prominently before the first Christians the cultus of the Saints, or to tolerate—much less to encourage—generally, the use of Images in public worship, while there was any appreciable danger of such representations of Christ and His Saints being abused by half-instructed neophytes. And so also in other cognate matters.

7. We remark, moreover, that religious devotions and pious practices, which afterwards became popular and were sanctioned by the Church, did not show themselves with any prominence in early times until the dogmas upon which they were based had been themselves set forth explicitly, and authoritatively defined. A doctrine must first be adequately apprehended, and distinctly believed, before the religious practice or devotion to which it gives rise will gain a hold on and become familiar to the faithful. This will explain what is noticeable in the Fathers, that whereas they dwell frequently on the glory and intercessory power of the Saints in heaven, hardly anything is to be found in their earlier writings on the duty or practice of praying to them, and very few examples are recorded by them of such invocation. For that matter, the same might be said as a general rule, even of prayer to our Lord Jesus Christ, and still more, to the Holy Ghost.

Cardinal Newman in stating an argument of the Anglican bishop, Butler, which is of force here, writes as follows:—

"As principles imply applications, and general propositions include particulars, so Butler tells us, do certain relations imply correlative duties, and certain objects demand certain acts and feelings. He observes that even though we were not enjoined to pay Divine honours to the Second and Third Persons of the Holy Trinity, what is predicated of Them in Scripture would be an abundant warrant, an indirect command, nay, a ground in reason for doing so. 'Does not,' he asks, 'the duty of religious regards to both these Divine Persons as immediately arise to the view of reason out of the very nature of their offices and relations, as the inward good-will and kind intention which we owe to our fellow-creatures, arises out of the common relations between us and them?' He proceeds to say that he is speaking of the inward religious regards of reverence, honour, love, trust, gratitude, fear, hope. 'In what external manner this inward worship is to be expressed, is a matter of pure revealed command; but the worship, the internal worship itself, to the Son and Holy Ghost, is no further matter of pure revealed command than as the relations they stand in to us are matter of pure revelation; for, the relations being known the obligations to such internal

worship are obligations of reason, arising out of those relations themselves.' Here is a development of doctrine into worship, of which parallel instances are obviously to be found in the Church of Rome." *

The Cardinal says later on :—

"Worship, then, is the necessary correlative of glory: and in the same sense in which created natures can share in the Creator's incommunicable glory, are they also allowed a share of that worship which is His property alone." †

8. We should not fail to remember all along, as we pursue our inquiry, that the doctrinal and devotional development in the first centuries of which we can now take any note, must not be put down for certain as precisely that which then actually had place amongst the faithful, but is such only as we can now discover from the extant records of antiquity. The works of the Fathers that have come down to us are comparatively few. Many of them have perished. Those that survive are not generally of such a character and scope, as would lead us to expect that we should find in them much information on details of popular devotion and piety. They deal for the most part with larger topics, the refutation of heresies and the vindication of the orthodox doctrine, Scriptural exegesis; or it is sermons preached on greater occasions, or discourses and treatises on special subjects, moral and religious. It is rare to find in them anything that bears directly on the devout habits and pious practices of the faithful, or that would portray and illustrate the ordinary Christian in the family and society. Here or there something to the point appears in the writings of one or other Father: but it is an isolated trait, or a passing allusion, suggestive, rather than enlightening. The monuments and inscriptions in the Catacombs throw, perhaps, more light on the modes of religious thought, devotions and practices of piety in fashion amongst the early Christians, than all the patristic works of the first three or four centuries. S. Ephrem may be said to stand alone in this respect, amongst all the Fathers of that

* *Development*, p. 49. The author thus continues: "A development converse to that which Butler speaks of, must next be mentioned. As certain objects excite certain emotions and sentiments, so do sentiments imply objects and duties. Thus conscience, the existence of which we cannot deny, is a proof of the doctrine of a Moral Governor, which alone gives it a meaning and a scope: that is, the doctrine of a Judge and Judgment to come is a development of conscience. . . . And the usage of prayers for the dead implies certain circumstances of their state upon which such devotions bear."

† *Ib.*, p. 142.

period whose writings have come down to us. He was a zealous and successful missionary preacher, whose fervid eloquence was in its matter and style at touch with the people. In his popular sermons, prayers are frequently addressed to the Saints, and exhortations to his hearers to invoke them. But we must wait for the writings of John Moschus, and S. Gregory of Tours, at the close of the sixth century, before we can find stories and anecdotes in any number that serve to illustrate the popular faith and practical devotion of the primitive Church in this matter. We say, *in any number*, for one or other is related by earlier Fathers. Here, however, we should not omit to take account of the Apocryphal writings belonging to the third or fourth centuries—some of them, perhaps, even to the second—which doubtless represent in great measure the popular sentiment, and are its outcome; as well as other records, such as the Acts of the early Martyrs, which, though drawn up in their present form at a later date, were derived in great part, at any rate, from original coeval documents, or from very ancient sources, that were still extant at the time of their compilation.

CHAPTER IV.

DOCTRINAL DEVELOPMENT (*Continued*).

Its Process Examined.

The reasons hitherto adduced to account for the development of Christian doctrine have been in the main extrinsic, derived from the special circumstances and influences that surrounded the preaching of the Faith in the first ages of the Church. What we are now to deal with is, rather, intrinsic and psychological, being drawn from a consideration of objective ideas in their contact with the intelligence, and their relation to mental cognition; and how, so far as they are thus assimilated to the human mind, they form the matter of its subjective thought, and are capable of intellectual development.

We may define such intellectual development of an idea to be a process of reflection, whereby what has been received and apprehended implicitly by the thought is unfolded, and becomes explicitly known to the mind.

Hence, it would seem to be an essential condition for any true development that the object on which it is exercised should be previously so presented to, and really seized by the intellect, as to form a distinct idea in the mind on which it may work. In proportion to the completeness and force of the subjective idea, and its correspondence with the objective truth, or the object which it represents, so far will it contain matter for and be capable of genuine intellectual development.

The implicit idea we have of any object is, of its nature, a totality or single whole, being commensurate with the object so far as it has been apprehended. Such an idea may be shadowy and imperfect, or it may be clear and full; but in any case it is simple, and holds a definite place of its own in the mind. We may, if we will, leave it alone as it is; or we may reflect upon it, analyse it, and thus begin to develop it. In this process we go,

so to say, round and about it, examining it from different points of view and in varying lights; comparing its several parts and aspects one with another, and these again with the integral whole; we bring in other cognate ideas and knowledge from outside, for comparison and contrast, to aid us in our survey; and take note of such results as we have found obviously to flow from the whole idea and the various views we have taken of it. In this way we have formed in our mind a number of concepts arising out of the simple idea, and on them we must pass some judgment. Thus, on the one hand, the idea remains present to our mind as it was originally, a simple whole, corresponding to our first implicit apprehension of the object; whilst, on the other hand, it appears broken up into its integral parts, that is to say, into a number of particular concepts. These concepts, even of one and the same idea, as also the judgments that may be passed on them, will vary in different minds, according to the more or less true and adequate apprehension that was first formed of the object, the amount of reflection and intelligence brought to bear on the idea, the aspects in which it was viewed, as well as the character or bias of individual minds.

This analysis, or resolution of an idea into its component parts or concepts, is the first stage in the process of development. The other is synthetical,* and consists first in the verification of the concepts, as really belonging to, and normally evolved from the original implicit idea; then, in passing judgment upon them, determining their relative place and importance; and in fitting them together again in harmony one with another and with the whole original idea as an integral unity.

Let us apply this to development of Christian doctrine. All truths of Christianity, so far as they are of Catholic faith, have their source in the exposition that was first given of them by the Apostles to whom they were originally and exclusively revealed. That exposition was definite, as also was the knowledge of revealed doctrines which the Church thence received. This *faith once for all delivered to the Saints* † can admit of no addition

* "The movement of the inner dialectics by which the mind coins ideas into concepts is essentially one of three stages, thesis, antithesis and synthesis. First comes the rude apprehension of the idea, which is positive; then comes a negative stage, when the judgment analyses its view, sees contradictions in it, and struggles to harmonise them; lastly comes the final harmony, which brings back the confusion to its original unity."—*Dublin Review*, July, 1869, p. 62.

† *Jude* 3.

or diminution. It hence follows that all subsequent definitions of faith must have been really contained in the explicit teaching of the Apostles, whether oral or written, and were really and adequately known by their successors, at least implicitly. This means that the several verities of faith were given in their totality or whole, and that their integral parts were from the first either explicitly taught, or were held implicitly, as being really contained in the whole. So also were they apprehended and delivered in their totality by the Apostles' successors, and handed down by Tradition.

But because such apprehension was implicit, no argument can thence be drawn that it was small.

"The Apostles having received their knowledge of these doctrines by immediate inspiration, apprehended them with immeasurably greater fulness and keenness than are obtainable by an ordinary uninspired Catholic of that or any later period." *

"That the later doctors of the Church," says Suarez, "were wiser than the Apostles in faith, or possessed *more explicit faith* than the Apostles . . . is a proposition commonly reprobated by theologians as *even temerarious*. For to them especially it was that Jesus Christ promised: *He will teach you all things, and bring all things to your mind, whatsoever I shall have said to you;* and, again, *All things whatsoever I have heard of My Father, I have made known to you.* . . .† This is plain from reason also: for they were the teachers of the faith of the New Testament, and, therefore, the Church's faith is said to be founded on that of the Apostles. This faith cannot, consequently, be greater in the Church than it was in them."‡

"We may distinguish," continues Suarez, "a twofold order of propositions, which, in course of time, came to be explicitly believed. Thus, some belong, so to say, to the substance of the mysteries: as, for example, in the mystery of the Incarnation, that Christ had two wills; and in the mystery of the Eucharist, that the substance of bread does not remain after the consecration. Truths of this sort, we must believe, were known by the Apostles, *not implicitly only, but explicitly:* since they had excellent understanding of the Scriptures, and of all mysteries appertaining to the tradition of faith. But there are other contingent propositions which, in the Apostles' time, had never come to pass, as, for instance, that this is the true Pontiff, that this is a true Council, and the like. Now it was not necessary that propositions of this kind should be known to the Apostles explicitly. It was enough that they should be known to them in general; for there was no need that all future things should be revealed to them." §

"Some writers use terms which imply that the first steps in the process of doctrinal development must be despicably small. Of course, such expressions

* *Dublin Review*, October, 1865, p. 333.
† *John* xiv. 26; xv. 15.
‡ *De Fide*, Disp. ii., sect. 6, n. 10.
§ *Ib.*, n. 18.

as germs and seeds are perfectly allowable; but, if they are employed to exaggerate the imperfection of Christian theology, they are dangerous and false. The very peculiarity of Christian development is, that the stream is broadest at its source. No theologian to the end will know more than the Apostles. Nay, there is nothing in the nature of the case to prevent the knowledge possessed by their immediate successors from being better in kind than that of subsequent theologians. This is historically borne out by the facts of the progress of Christian dogma. The enunciations of the earliest writers on our Lord's Godhead are more downright and unequivocal than those of the Fathers who followed them. Who ever found fault with S. Clement and S. Ignatius? It is with the Apologists that the difficulties begin. So it is with our Lady. The doctrine of S. Irenæus and of the author of the Second Epistle to Diognetus is far higher than that of Origen." *

"Doctrines," writes Fr. Dalgairnus, "were delivered whole, and their growth is a process of evolution by which the hidden harmony of the parts is rendered visible, though all those parts were previously taught or implicitly held. The development consists in bringing to light by reflection what was spontaneously believed before. It is the unfolding of an idea, which was given whole. Christian truths were thus planted whole like the trees in paradise; they grew, they unfolded blossoms, and they developed into fruit, but they never sprang from seed. If the principle is to be of any scientific use, we must not be content with indistinct germs, any more than we could hope to satisfy a man who asked for an oak, by showing him an acorn." †

Here a difficulty at once arises. How are we to account for the fact, that individual Fathers, some of them of great name and weight, have expressed themselves on certain points of doctrine—now believed as of faith, and consequently from the beginning forming part of the revealed deposit—in terms quite inconsistent with subsequent definitions of the Church? For thus did not only suspected writers like S. Hippolytus and Origen, but even S. Dionysius of Alexandria, with regard to the Consubstantiality of the Divine Word, and, later on, S. Bernard and S. Thomas, with regard to the Immaculate Conception.

Our explanation is, that the hesitations and conflicting statements of such Fathers were scientific; that is to say, they arose not from a false idea of the truth of faith as a whole, but from a difficulty in harmonising a certain mode of conceiving it—or the concept they had formed on some point of it—with some other concept, or portion of the whole. Thus S. Dionysius denied the ὁμοούσιον as the mode of conceiving truly, and as a term rightly expressing the idea of faith, *viz.*, the Godhead of the Divine Word, though, as such, it was afterwards solemnly defined by the

* *Dublin Review*, Jan., 1869, p. 38.

† *Lives of the Fathers of the Desert*, Introduction, p. xlix.

Church. Here his scientific theology was at fault, not his implicit faith in the mystery as a whole. He did not see how the concept of Consubstantiality could accord with the real distinction between the Father and the Son, and with the whole idea of the Divine Truth of the Trinity. In like manner the hesitation of S. Thomas was scientific: he could not understand how Mary's Immaculate Conception could be reconciled with her real redemption.

The great primary truths of Christian revelation delivered by the Apostles would at first, we conceive, hold their place in the Church, and be impressed on the minds and hearts of the faithful, as simple whole ideas in broad outline, and thus, too, would be set forth by the earliest teachers. In this shape they were, with the aid of supernatural faith, adequately apprehended, and were expressed very much in the general terms used by the Apostles. As, however, each mystery came in turn to be meditated and reflected upon, new thoughts began to open out, fresh aspects of the truth to present themselves, so that what before was conceived as a whole and simple, now appeared manifold. Then, the various emerging doctrinal views were discussed and put to the proof of scientific analysis by theologians; their mutual coherence, their bearing one upon another, and their orthodoxy were tested; whilst, to meet difficulties and discrepancies that arose, differing opinions and judgments were hazarded, together with divers methods for combination and agreement. Thus, it is easy to understand how individual Fathers, whilst still retaining their implicit hold of a revealed truth in its orthodox sense as a whole, might be led to form wrong judgments and make erroneous statements on this or that particular point of it which had not yet been formally settled by the Church.

In the case of the early Fathers we have, moreover, to take account of circumstances of time and country, and the bias they might have received, whether from some influential school of philosophy, or from their opposition to certain prevalent errors.

This, too, will explain how Fathers, in whose writings are found erroneous or imperfect statements on certain doctrines which have since been defined to be dogmas of faith, were not on that account ranked as unorthodox or heretical; and have not lost the otherwise high repute in which they were held by the Church. But here we should remark that when any particular Father thus erred, his doctrinal view was opposed to the general current of Catholic tradition, to the more common religious sense

of the faithful, and especially to the uniform teaching of the Roman Church.

It is, indeed, very noteworthy, that in the various controversies that have successively arisen within the Catholic Church—whether between particular Churches, or amongst theologians—*e.g.*, on the Paschal question, heretical baptism, and penance, the ὁμοούσιον, the *Filioque*, the Immaculate Conception, and Papal Infallibility, Rome has uniformly proposed and defended that view of the question, which in course of time has with universal sanction been approved as the truth, or has been so decided by a General Council. With regard to other particular Churches, one portion of Apostolic teaching might survive in vigour, but not another; whereas in Rome the entire original tradition of faith ever remained intact. Hence, when speaking of the doctrinal authority of Rome, Tertullian exclaims:—

"That Church, how happy! into which the Apostles poured out *all their doctrine* together with their blood." *

The doctrinal judgments of individual Fathers and Doctors arrived at by theological discussion and scientific analysis, are of themselves fallible. The Church alone, through the voice of her chief Pastor, or in General Council, can pronounce infallibly a definitive sentence as to their truth, and on their relation to the deposit of faith. These judgments she sifts, some of them she approves and accepts, others she condemns and rejects. In this way the former make part of that normal and true doctrinal development which must necessarily have place in the teaching of a living moral body, such as the Catholic Church is.

An authoritative definition of some particular scientific analysis of a doctrine, that is to say, of the right mode of scientific thought on a theological truth, as, for example, the ὁμοούσιον, or the Immaculate Conception, is no new dogma in an accretive sense. It is to be regarded as an infallible exposition of an already divinely revealed truth, necessary for its protection from erroneous teaching, and inseparable from its right mode of belief. Whilst it is an addition to the knowledge of very many Christians, it is no addition to the original deposit of faith. This was delivered entire to the Apostles, and has never changed. What the Church does by her progressive teaching, is to elucidate its contents, as occasion demands, for the profit of the faithful. For

* *De Præscript.* 36.

such authoritative development on the part of the Church, the opinions, discussions, controversies and teachings of Fathers, doctors and theologians prepare the way. When the Church has once given her decision on the point in dispute, the matter is set at rest for ever and can never again be brought into question. All the diverse views of particular doctors, and the fluctuating judgments of individual theologians are then at an end. The doctrine is removed from the sphere of theological opinion to be a dogma of faith. The infallible Church of Christ can never reverse her ruling. Her negative can never become an affirmative: what she has once affirmed cannot again be denied. Thus through her definition there is made a formal accession to doctrinal development, and to the explicit faith of Catholics. That such development is her own proper office, and has been from the beginning her constant care, is expressly declared in the Bulls, *Ineffabilis*, which defined the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception, and the *Æterni Patris*, which summoned the Vatican Council.

If, then, we regard the development of Christian doctrine as a result, progressively realised in the more explicit teaching and belief of divinely revealed truths, it may be defined to be an aggregate of judgments normally evolved out of ideas that were conveyed as integral unities by the teaching of the Apostles, and which judgments have been guaranteed as infallibly true by the Divine authority of the Catholic Church.

APPENDIX.

The following from the pen of the Rev. J. B. Morris very appositely illustrates the matter treated of in the foregoing chapter:—

"If the parts of so vast a system as that of the Gospel is, appeared, after all the pains which reason enlightened by faith could bestow upon it, still to be inconsistent, even then such inconsistency would not be a sufficient ground for rejecting it. A system professing, as that of the Church's teaching does, to come from God, if rejected, must not be rejected for what to weak mortals appeared internal inconsistencies, but for want of sufficient external evidences.

"But as the case at present stands, there is the greatest internal consistency in the Catholic system to the patient and close observer of it; and especially between the doctrine of the Incarnation and the veneration we pay to the Mother of God. Now though internal consistency when bereft of external proof may be worth very little, as certain systems of philosophy may perhaps prove, still it can scarce be made a question that when there is some

sort of external proof, the internal consistency will to the generality form an additional proof. For people would not object to a system, 'that it is inconsistent,' if they did not feel that consistency was some sort of proof. . . . If it appears that a correct (though partial) idea of our doctrine of the Incarnation paves the way to our doctrine and practice in regard to our Lady, then the internal connection between the two will be seen and acknowledged. What I am insisting on here is, that the former *paves the way* to the latter, to which I wish to draw particular attention, for reasons I shall now proceed to state.

"The Catholic belief on either point may be regarded either as a thing felt in the heart of Christians from the first, or as a thing systematically treated of by polemical divines. It is plain that the first of these must have existed before the last. What Protestants suppose is, that if the first really existed, it must in the course of five centuries have shown itself visibly and unmistakably in the latter. What our divines often reply is, that so many documents are lost, that we cannot estimate the contents of the mind of the Church from the contents of those which remain. It might be added, that if God, who can show the unknown future in a vision, were in a vision to show us the unknown past, we should find early Christians devout to Mary, as well as Christians of this day. This is what I suppose both parties to feel in the matter. Now to take away *in limine* an objection, which may be felt to taking the Catholic theory, where, from defect of documents, all is guess-work, let the following observations be attended to.

"The doctrine of the Church, like its subject-matter, stands alone and without parallel in the world. Therefore all illustrations of it will necessarily be imperfect; still the following shall be hazarded. A person who is master of a language, knows what the genius of that language requires by a perception indistinguishable from intuition. This perception he shares with others who knew the same language hundreds of years before him. Neither they nor he could communicate it to persons external to that language. In order to do this, recourse must be had to grammar rules and other subsequent inventions, calculated indeed to convey some idea of that language to others, but wholly inadequate to transferring to the mind of a foreigner that delicate sense of what the genius of each language requires which belongs to a native. Hence most persons have heard narrow-minded persons extol in turns every language of Europe as the finest language in the world, according as these last happen from birth or habituation to have gained an insight into the genius of any particular language. But suppose a person to have found that the grammarians of any nation had remodelled their statements, introduced by degrees rules entirely new, and in appearance contradictory to the positive assertions of their predecessors; suppose that these grammarians even differed materially with one another as to the right mode of stating things, and that in consequence the person spoken of should complain that the language had entirely changed its genius since the time of the former grammarians, a native would reply to him that the genius of the language to his eyes was as palpably as possible the very same it had always been, but that he (who complained), having only such a crude idea of it as grammars and dictionaries could give him, could not possibly have that delicate sense implied by speaking of 'entering into the genius of a language.' It was this [intuitive sense], the native would say—and not those [grammars and dictionaries]—which enabled

himself to identify the genius of the language even in the earliest authors. Nevertheless, he might frankly admit that, though its personal identity remained full and entire, the philosophical labours of the philologian had had a certain reflex action on its entirety.

"Apply this to the Catholic religion: if there are early traces of identity of belief, they may be invisible, except to the eye of a Catholic, but perfectly clear to him. For an immense number of minute expressions, observations, and practices prove to him, that the genius of his faith is what it always was. It subsisted antecedently to the polemical and dogmatical works in which it is stated, and independently of them. Whatever influence they have exerted on it, has been that of a favoured slave, not of a master, or equal. If you cannot find the same language about the Incarnation in the four first centuries, as was found in the four subsequent ones, so neither can you find in the three first centuries the same language about the Trinity as was issued in the fourth century. If it is absurd to assume that, in spite of difficulties, the same doctrine was held by Gregory Nyssen about the human wisdom of our Lord, as was held by Gregory the Great, then it is absurd to assume that Clement of Alexandria had the same idea of a hypostasis in the Trinity as Basil had. A Brahmin, if he were to study Christian doctrine historically, would be nearly sure to think the Trinity, of which the name rarely occurs in early writers, a novelty of the third century; and, if he argued as Protestants do, would conclude that the thing was new also. If he looked to the consistency of the thing, he might see that the doctrine of the Trinity in the fourth century paved the way to the doctrine of the Incarnation in the fifth, and this again to the veneration of Mary. . . .

"In Christian doctrine there is this most remarkable and probably wholly unparalleled phenomenon. The writers of the eighteenth century hold everything positive which was held by the writers of the sixteenth, and these again all that was held by those before them, and so on as far as any documents will carry us. One century after another deduced its own conclusions from premisses unwittingly supplied it by its predecessor. Now, supposing the Church to have the whole sum of doctrine before her at the first, this is intelligible: supposing her not to have had it (as Protestants assert), then it does not appear that this coherence or consistency of doctrine could be brought about by anything but design; such design cannot be denied without denying in principle final causes altogether. Either Almighty God, who knew, in the fifth century, what would be wanted in subsequent ones, so taught His Church the Incarnation as to pave the way to the recognition of Mary's privileges, or the Church did it by chance. Either God is a liar, when He promises to be with His Church to the end of days; or, let God be true, and men are liars when they deny this evidence of a wise designer. When the Church, in making statements about the Trinity, paved the way to her subsequent teaching about the Incarnation or Double Procession, and laid down principles admirably suited to the proof of these, she acted, we say, by a Divine instinct. But when, with the same appearance of foresight, in discussing the Incarnation, Predestination, or Grace, she laid down principles admirably suited to prove the Immaculate Conception and dignity of Mary, she acted, you [Protestants] ought to say, by a diabolical delusion. An unprejudiced philosopher would regard the one as much as the other as an instance either of organic growth of doctrine, or gradual display of things

secretly known. 'The faith,' says Leo, 'which is but one, cannot be in anything unlike itself.'*

"Neither is this altogether a novel view of things, as will appear from the following passage from one of Pope Gelasius's Letters, written in the fifth century: 'Whatever our Catholic ancestors and learned bishops, in the case of every heresy that came up on each occasion, once sanctioned in a Council in defence of the Catholic and Apostolic truth and communion, following the track of Scripture and the preaching of their ancestors, that they would have ever after to continue unshaken and settled; nor did they, upon one and the same subject, allow that points, before fixed, should, on the score of any novel presumption, be handled over again; most wisely *foreseeing*, that, if anybody and everybody had leave to retrace things once soberly decreed, the Church would have no fixed constitution against any single error whatever, and every sound definition would be perpetually liable to disturbance from the recurrence of the same phrensies. For, however clear the truth might be made, there is never wanting a something for mischievous falsehood to bring forward, deficient though it may be in reasons or authorities, yet through mere contentiousness, refusing to give in. And this our ancestors, *by Divine inspiration beholding*, necessarily took precaution that what the synod, collected against each heresy, had promulgated in behalf of the faith, that they would not allow to be mutilated afterwards by being handled over again.'† And what is here said of Councils, extends to particular Fathers. If Basil or Athanasius seem in places, when treating of the Consubstantiality of the Son with the Father, to gainsay subsequent teaching about the wisdom of Christ's soul, still the positions they established about the Consubstantiality remain fixed for ever after. Cyril, Augustine, Leo, or Maximus take them for granted, and reason from them when discussing the Incarnation. In the same way, later writers take the principles of these last for granted, when they reason about the Blessed Virgin. Heretical doctrines, on the contrary, stultify the principles of preceding ages. Thus the doctrine of the single Procession renders the formulas elicited in controversy for expressing the doctrine of the Trinity null and void.

"This kind of argument admits, perhaps, of being worked out at great length: but this book will exhibit it in the single instance of Mary's privileges, considered as flowing from the Incarnation. What is intended is, not to assert that the present devotion to Mary existed in the early ages; that may be so or not: but that the principle on which it is based naturally led to it, and may be assumed to have been intended by God to lead to it. If Protestants allow that it existed, we and Protestants need not be at variance: if we point to proofs of it, they will not see them with our eyes, and, therefore, they shall not be insisted on here. But what is insisted on is, the marvellous consistency between the principles of the Trinitarian controversialists with those of the

* *Epist.* 29, 1.

† *Hardouin*, ii., p. 906. A passage to the same purpose may be added here from Montagne, *alias* Tournely, *De Gratia*, p. 149, ed. Migne: "It is quite possible that matters which were not before proposed to be believed explicitly, should afterwards be so proposed: but the Church's firmness and immobility in her decrees does not permit that she should at one time have required faith of some mystery, and expelled from her bosom those who hold otherwise, and then afterwards allow the same faith to be wiped out."

authors of the fifth and following centuries who wrote on the Incarnation. If the former prophetically supplied the Church with what she wanted, why suppose the latter deprived of the same prophetic gift? God declares that He will pour out doctrine, *as* prophecy, and the prophets did not know for whom or what they ministered many things.* You say, the Fathers knew not Mary: we will grant it, but we insist on your explaining by any human principles, how they paved the way to our teaching upon the subject. We hold all that you can prove they held, and something involved in it, which you cannot prove that they did not hold. You have seen the oracles the Church prophetically uttered of old: why not trust her then to be from God, and believe her in other things to be intended for your guide? If natural religion found an oracle that foretold many things truly, it would make that oracle its practical guide in all.† Why then give us ground to think that Protestantism has discarded the religion of nature?" ‡

* *Ecclus.* xxiv. 46; 1 *Pet.* i. 10-12.

† Πείθεις με· πολλὰ γάρ σε θεσπιζονθ' ὁρῶ
Κοὐ ψευδόφημα, χὤτι χρὴ ποιεῖν, λεγε.

Which may be thus rendered:—

Now thou persuadest me: for well I see
Thee many truths divinely uttering,
Nor prophesying falsely. Prithee, then,
Tell me my duty, what I ought to do.
—Soph., *Œd. Col.*, 1516.

‡ *Jesus, the Son of Mary*, etc., by the Rev. John Brande Morris, M.A., 1851, p. i. ch. i. pp. 25-33.

THE BLESSED VIRGIN IN THE FATHERS OF THE FIRST SIX CENTURIES.

CHAPTER I.

THE PRIMITIVE PATRISTIC IDEA OF MARY AS THE SECOND EVE.

It has been already said that there is nothing in the nature of the case to prevent the less explicit knowledge of revealed truth in the first age of the Church being better in kind than that of theologians later on. What was wanting in explicitness and extension of detail might be more than compensated in intensity, by greater depth, a stronger impress, and a more lively energy. This is strikingly exemplified in the doctrinal teaching of three of the earliest Fathers with regard to the Blessed Virgin. The idea of Mary presented in the writings of S. Justin, S. Irenæus, and Tertullian, in the second century—from its fulness of conception, clearness of definition, and suggestion of a type of excellence, unique and without parallel—is more perfect and complete than what appears in some Fathers of a subsequent period.

S. Justin, A.D. 120-165, thus writes:—

"We know that the Son of God . . . before all creatures came forth from the Father by His power and will . . . and through means of the Virgin became Man, that by what way the disobedience which was from the serpent took its beginning, by the same way it might have its undoing. For whereas Eve, yet a virgin and undefiled, through conceiving the word that came from the serpent, brought forth disobedience and death; the Virgin Mary, taking faith and joy, when the Angel told her the good tidings that *the Spirit of the Lord should come upon her, and the power of the Most High overshadow her, and therefore, the Holy One to be born of her should be the Son of God*, answered, *Be it done to me according to thy word.* And so by means of her was He born, concerning whom we have shown so many Scriptures were spoken: through

whom God overthrows the serpent, and those angels and men who have become like to it, and, on the other hand, works deliverance from death for such as repent of their evil doings and believe in Him." *

S. Irenæus, A.D. 120-200, says:—

"In accordance with this design [of saving the human race] Mary is found obedient, saying, *Behold Thy handmaid, O Lord.* Whereas, Eve was disobedient, since she obeyed not whilst yet a virgin. Eve, moreover—having Adam for her husband, though still a virgin—through being disobedient, became the cause of death, both to herself and to the whole human race. Whereas Mary, having a husband fore-appointed,† and yet a virgin, by yielding obedience, became both to herself and to the whole human race the cause of salvation. And for this reason the Law calls her who is espoused to a man, though still a virgin, the wife of him who has espoused her, thereby pointing to that intercircling which traces back from Mary to Eve. For what is knotted up together cannot be unloosed, except by undoing the whole series of knots, and in such a way that the knots earliest made have to be undone, by first untying the knots that were made later. And so these latter set free the former. Hence, because the unloosing of the first-made must depend on the one made next, it is this latter that has to be undone first. And so said the Lord, *The first shall be last, and the last first.*‡ The Prophet also signifies the same, saying, *Instead of fathers, thou hast children.*§ For whereas, the Lord when born was *the first-begotten of the dead,*‖ and received into His bosom the primitive fathers, He regenerated them into the life of God, by Himself becoming the beginning of the living, whilst Adam became the beginning of those that die.¶ For this cause also Luke, beginning his genealogy from Our Lord, carried it back to Adam, to signify that it was He who regenerated them [His own forefathers], not they Him, into the Gospel of life. Even so, too, the knot of Eve's disobedience obtained its unloosing through the obedience of Mary: for what Eve, a virgin, bound by her unbelief, that same, Mary, a virgin, unbound by her faith." **

The Saint's argument is somewhat obscure. He compares Mary with Eve, the faith and obedience of the former with the unbelief and disobedience of the latter, the intimate union of Mary and Jesus Christ her Son—the Man predestined to be the Second Adam through the mystery of the Incarnation—with Eve's marriage to the first Adam. He says then, that just as Eve, a virgin though married, by her sin of disobedience implicated the

* *Tryph.* 100.

† The words of the Latin version, "*habens prædestinatum virum,*" might also be rendered, "having the predestined Man".

‡ *Matt.* xix. 30, xx. 16.

§ *Ps.* xliv. 17.

‖ *Apoc.* i. 5.

¶ 1 *Cor.* xv. 20-22.

** *Hær.* iii. 22, 34.

whole human race in, so to say, an intricate series of knots, and was to it the cause of death, so too the Virgin Mary, also like Eve espoused to a husband,* by means of her faith and obedience, unloosed the knots that Eve had tied, and thus became the cause of salvation both to herself and to all mankind. That an espoused virgin, whose marriage is not yet consummated, has, according to the Law, the name of wife, is interpreted by the Saint as mystically referring to Eve and Mary—who are alike in being espoused virgins, wives, and mothers—in order thus to contrast the nature and fruit of their maternity, and to show how Mary's virginal Motherhood of the Incarnate Word counteracted the evil consequences of the marriage of Eve to Adam. For, argues the Saint, as what is bound up together by a number of knots cannot be unloosed except by beginning with those last made—there being no other way of getting at the knots first tied—so it is in the present matter. Through Eve's marriage to Adam, which was consummated after her disobedience, all succeeding generations of the human race were inextricably bound together by so many knots of sin, until the time of Mary and the coming of Jesus Christ, the Second Adam. Mary, by her faith and obedience, was the first to undo the complication, and not for herself alone. For the unloosing which she began went through the whole preceding series, until it came back to Eve. In this way the knot wherewith Eve was tied by her own disobedience, and the baneful complication that resulted from her marriage to fallen Adam, consummated in sin, were undone by means of the faithful obedience of Mary, and her union with Jesus Christ the Second Adam in grace and sanctity.†

S. Irenæus says again :—

"The Lord then plainly came to His own; and whilst that of His own creating which He Himself sustains then sustained Himself, He wrought the undoing of that disobedience which took place with the tree [of knowledge] by that obedience which took place on the tree [of the Cross]. That seduction, too, was put an end to, whereby the virgin Eve, already destined for a husband, was evilly seduced. Of all these good tidings the Virgin Mary, already under a husband, was truly informed by the Angel. For as Eve was seduced by an angel's word so as to shun God, after she had transgressed His word, so Mary also by an Angel's word had the glad tidings given her, that she might bear God, obeying His word. And if the former had disobeyed God,

* Or, according to the other interpretation, in union with the predestined Man.

† See the note *in loc. Migne.*

yet the latter was persuaded to obey God, that the Virgin Mary might be the advocate (paraclete) of the virgin Eve. And as the human race was bound to death by means of a virgin, it is saved by means of a Virgin; the poise of the balance being restored; a virgin's disobedience is saved by a Virgin's obedience. For while the sin of the protoplast was still receiving correction through that punishment of his, the prudence of the serpent having been overcome by the simplicity of the dove, we were set free from those chains by which we had been bound to death." *

Tertullian, A.D. 160-240, writes :—

"Now the whole of this new birth [of the Second Adam] was prefigured, as was the case in all other instances, in ancient type; the Lord being born as man by a dispensation in which a virgin was the medium. The earth was still in a virgin state, wrought as yet by no human labour, with no seed as yet cast into its furrows, when we are told God made man out of it into a living soul. As, then, the first Adam is thus introduced to us, it is a just inference that the Second Adam likewise, as the Apostle has told us, was formed by God into a quickening spirit out of the ground—in other words, out of flesh as yet unstained by any human generation. But that I may not lose the opportunity of supporting my argument from the name of Adam, why, I ask, is Christ called Adam by the Apostle, unless it be that, as Man, He was of that earthly Virgin? † And reason, too, here maintains the same conclusion: because it was by a rival operation that God recovered His own image and likeness, of which He had been robbed by the devil. For it was whilst Eve was yet a virgin that the word crept in, which was the framer of death. Into a Virgin, in like manner, must be introduced the Word of God who was the builder up of life: so that by that same sex whence had come our ruin, might also come our recovery to salvation. Eve had believed the serpent, Mary believed Gabriel. The fault which the one committed by believing, the other by believing blotted out. But, it might be said, Eve conceived nothing in her womb from the devil's word. Nay, but she did conceive; for the devil's word became to her as seed, that she might conceive as an outcast, and bring forth in sorrow. She gave birth, in fact, to a fratricidal devil; whilst Mary, on the contrary, bare Him who was one day to save Israel, His own brother after the flesh and the murderer of Himself. God sent down therefore into the Virgin's womb His Word to be our true Brother, who should blot out the memory of that evil brother. Hence it was necessary that Christ should come forth for the salvation of man in that condition [of flesh] into which man had entered ever since his condemnation." ‡

In these passages Mary is set forth as the Second Eve, taking a part with her Divine Son in our Redemption corresponding to the share which the first Eve had with Adam in our Fall; compensating by her faith and obedience for the unbelief and

* *Hær.* v. 19. See S. Augustine's text of the passage. *Contr. Jul. Pel.* i. 5.

† Or, it might be interpreted: Were not the Man he is speaking of the true standard whereby to judge of the earthly one.

‡ *De Carne Christi*, 17. *Patr. Lat.* Tom. 2, p. 782.

disobedience of the guilty Eve, and being thus an advocate with God in her behalf.

This comparison between Mary and Eve is one both of likeness and contrast: of likeness, in original sanctity and virginal innocence; of contrast, in their actual conduct and its effects. Eve and Mary, alike, are virgins, and virgins espoused. Both one and the other co-operate in union with a man, the guilty Eve with her husband Adam, himself now fallen; Mary, a holy and immaculate Virgin, with the Man predestined as the Second Adam, her Divine Son, the Incarnate Word. Each holds a place in the human family exclusively her own, and a rank of pre-eminence above that of all other women, absolutely unrivalled and unique. For Eve and Mary alone are first Mothers of the entire race. Eve the Mother of all men according to the flesh in the order of nature: Mary their spiritual Mother in the supernatural order of grace. Hence their prominence in Genesis and the Gospel as the twin representative women of the two Dispensations: Eve of the Old Testament, Mary of the New; and hence the striking parallel of circumstances in the opening scenes of the world's two great dramas—Man's Fall and Redemption—as now Eve, then Mary, first appears on the stage of humanity, with issues of vital consequence to the whole race.

Alike in Eden and at Nazareth, to a virgin in solitude an angel speaks. But, at once, how great the contrast! In Eden, the serpent, an angel of darkness, speaks false to the virgin Eve, who, giving credence to his word, withdraws from God her faith and obedience. In the house of Nazareth, the holy angel, Gabriel, greets with good tidings the Virgin Mary, who, receiving his message with faith and joy, believes in God, and is obedient to His word. Eve conceives a lie that works man's ruin and death; Mary conceives the Word of God, who restores to man salvation and life. Both alike are Mothers; but their Motherhood how unlike! Unbelieving, disobedient Eve, as wife of fallen Adam, is Mother, according to the flesh, of her children conceived in sin, and bound to death. The faithful and obedient Virgin Mary, by her union with Jesus Christ, her Son, becomes the spiritual Mother of children regenerated to a Divine life of holiness and grace.

We will here make a brief transition, and note the similar parallel drawn by S. Paul between Jesus Christ and Adam, which has corresponding points of likeness and antithesis. The Apostle speaks of Adam as the figure of Christ; he, moreover, expressly

calls Our Lord the Second Adam. The likeness between Adam and Christ may be said to lie generally in the relation which they both bore to the human race as its father and head ; Adam in the natural order of creation, Our Lord Jesus Christ in the supernatural order of grace. But there is yet another and a closer resemblance of Adam to Christ, which, inasmuch as it formed part of the Divine plan concerning Adam, should be accounted a real likeness, though through his transgression it failed of actual effect. For, had Adam remained unfallen, he would—because constituted the natural father and head of the whole human race —have preserved, by his own obedience, both himself and his descendants in original justice and life, and been thus in a true sense their father and head, not only by nature, but also spiritually in the order of grace.

The contrast drawn of the two lies in the different conduct and effects of each : that, whereas the sin and disobedience of the first Adam wrought our condemnation and death, the justice and obedience of the Second Adam obtained our justification and life. Hence we see S. Paul likens Our Lord to Adam whilst yet unfallen, and contrasts Him with Adam in his transgression.*

There is another point of analogy in these two comparisons of Mary with Eve, and of Christ with Adam, which is of great significance. This is the wholly subsidiary part that Eve had in the Fall, corresponding to that which Mary had in the Redemption. They both alike have their share of co-operation ; but are not the efficient causes of either one or the other result. For to speak with just precision, it is through Adam's disobedience alone that all are made sinners and die ; and it is through Christ's obedience alone we are justified and live. He of Himself alone is *to all who obey Him the cause of eternal salvation.*†

S. Paul's comparison of Christ with Adam, founded as it is on the account of man's fall in Genesis, seems necessarily thence to demand for its complement, a like comparison between the woman there predicted as the Serpent's antagonist who should give birth to the promised Seed, and Eve, the first woman, who, with Adam, had taken part in the Fall. And since, as a matter of fact, such a comparison is found in Fathers of the sub-Apostolic age, it would be only reasonable to believe that the doctrine of

* *Rom.* v. 12-19 ; 1 *Cor.* xv. 21, 22, 45-49.
† *Heb.* v. 9.

Mary as the Second Eve was explicitly taught by the Apostles themselves, and had its place in the revealed deposit. That this was actually the case is certain from S. John's Apocalyptic vision,* wherein *the old serpent, who is called the devil and Satan*, comes once more on the scene; and, in conflict with him, appears the woman predicted in Genesis to be his perpetual foe, who has now brought forth her promised Seed, that *Man-child who was to rule over all nations*,† Jesus Christ Our Lord.

The triple patristic testimony which we cited, shows clearly that this idea of Mary as the Second Eve was the tradition prevalent throughout Christendom in the first centuries. Those three Fathers represent the three Patriarchates of Rome, Alexandria, and Antioch. S. Justin from Palestine is witness for Antioch; the African Tertullian for Alexandria; and S. Irenæus for Rome. S. Irenæus, we should remember, had been instructed in his youth by S. Polycarp, who was made Bishop of Smyrna by appointment of the Apostles, and had himself been in early years a disciple of S. John the Evangelist, to whom personally was revealed that vision of Mary, which under Divine inspiration, he has recorded in the Apocalypse.

This same Irenæus, thus removed but one step from the Apostles, had resided for a considerable time in Rome, in order to become conversant with the traditions of its Church. He tells us in his writings that S. Clement, Bishop of Rome, from the intimate relations and intercourse he there enjoyed with S. Peter and S. Paul, "had still the preaching of the blessed Apostles ringing in his ears, and their tradition before his eyes, and not Clement alone; but many in that Church still survived, who had been taught by the Apostles." The Saint testifies, furthermore, that "the same tradition and preaching of the truth, which the Church had received from the Apostles, had come down to him; and consequently that one and the very same life-giving faith had been preserved in the Church, and was handed down in its purity and integrity from the Apostles even to his own day."‡

Now this idea of Mary as the Second Eve is one of the highest and most important signification. It assigns to her a place in God's decrees, and in the Divine economy of the human race that is absolutely exceptional and unique. For as Eve was mother of all mankind, not only in the physical order of nature,

* *Apoc.* xii. † See *Ps.* ii. 8, 9. ‡ *Hær.* iii. 3.

but in the moral order also as regards sin, through her own personal disobedience, and her becoming a mother, as wife of Adam, after his transgression. So too, Mary was not only physically the Mother of the Incarnate Word, but her motherhood both of Himself, the Saviour of mankind, and of all those whom He came to save, was of the moral order also, through her own personal faith and obedience, the consent which she gave to be herself the Mother of the Divine Word made man, and the co-operation which she bore with Him, as His Mother in the work of Redemption. And hence as the place of Eve amongst women is in the natural order, and in what relates to the heritage of original sin altogether solitary and without parallel, so too is that of Mary in the supernatural order and the economy of grace.*

What, however, we would here principally insist upon is, that this idea—thus early impressed upon the Church's mind—of God's ever-Virgin Mother, co-operating, as an unfallen Eve in our Redemption, implicitly contains in its fulness whatever else the Catholic Church has at any time taught concerning Our Lady. The idea is, so to say, so broad and far-reaching as to cover all that has since been explicitly defined, and formed matter

* Jesus and Mary hold a similar place in the re-creation of the human family (only how much more sublime) to that which Adam and Eve held in its creation. . . . Eve was, so to say, second in the order of God's designs. She was created to be a helpmate for Adam. Mary, too, was elected second in the order of grace. She was created to be a handmaiden to Jesus in His Incarnation. Eve was the first to fall, Mary was the first to rise. The fall of Eve, if it had not drawn along with it the fall of Adam too, would have had no effect in the rest of her race. They would not have thereby forfeited the sanctifying grace and original justice, which God had promised. So in like manner, the personal immunity of Mary from original sin would have been of no service to the fallen children of Adam, had it not also entailed with it the Incarnation of the Word and the Nativity of the Redeemer. The first Adam was the head and representative of man, upright; and his fall was the fall of all his progeny. His sin was vicarious; and the universal stain was its consequence. The Second Adam was the Supreme Head and Representative of man fallen. His Passion, Death, Merits, Resurrection, Ascension, were the passion, death, merits, resurrection, and ascension of all. His abundant Satisfaction—His obedience unto death—was vicarious. And man's reconciliation with God, and restoration to grace, were the joyful result. We may then surely affirm that, as without Adam there would have been no Eve; so in like manner, but for Christ Our Lord, there would have been no Mary. Her predestination is the consequence of His. She is, of a truth, like the moon; for while she affectionately girdles the earth, shining upon it during the long night of its exile from God; yet her pure, tranquillising light is a simple reflection of the Sun, whose rising on the morning of the Resurrection will be our Light and Life during the endless days of our Bliss." Fr. Harper, *Peace through the Truth*, 1st series, p. 235.

for the pious belief and devotion of the faithful regarding Mary's graces and privileges.

The main idea represents Mary as a second unfallen Eve, bearing a part in the work of man's Redemption similar to that which the first Eve, by her transgression, had in his Fall. In this view the Fathers are so often led to draw a parallel of contrast between the Gospel narrative of the Annunciation made by the Angel Gabriel to Mary of the Incarnation, and the scene in Genesis of Eve's seduction to disobedience by the serpent.

This whole idea is made up of two parts. The matter of the first is Mary, an unfallen Eve; that of the second, her co-operation as such in man's Redemption. In order to show the normal development of the whole, let us put each part to the test of some analysis.

1. Mary is Eve unfallen. The first Eve was created innocent, free from all sin and moral imperfection, in the state of original justice and sanctifying grace. Consequently, Mary, the second Eve, was also created in Divine grace, holy and immaculate from the first moment of her conception. Had Eve remained unfallen and faithful to God, she would have not only continued altogether sinless, but by her co-operation with grace, increased its store, and, full of virtues and merits, obtained from God the crowning grace of confirmation and final perseverance in her blessed state. All this was verified in the case of Mary, the true unfallen Eve, through her faithful correspondence with the fulness of grace which she received, and through the intimate union she had with the Second Adam, Jesus Christ her Son. The first Eve, in contrast, lost her true union with Adam by sin. Whereas, had both Adam and Eve remained unfallen, they would have remained united to one another more closely than by any natural ties, through means of the supernatural bond of Divine grace and charity; sharing, furthermore, the blessedness of together being the first parents of a sinless and holy race.

Again, had Eve not sinned, she would have been recompensed for all her virtues and sanctity exercised for God's glory in her stainless course on earth, by exemption at its close from death and corruption as the penalty of sin. More than this, instead of passing through death, she would by privilege have been translated in body as well as in soul from earth to heaven, there to receive her merited crown of immortal glory. The immaculate Virgin Mary, the Second Eve, persevered to the end unfallen. Consequently, so far as sin was concerned, she was in no way

bound by the law of death. She died, indeed, as heir to the ordinary and purely physical consequences to which all human flesh had in Adam become by nature subject. She died, too, because Jesus Christ her Son had died, and herein she was to be made like to Him. But though she died, death, having no claims of sin upon her, might not detain her. Hence she was preserved from such of its effects as would have impeded the recompense which, as the unfallen Eve, she had merited by her perfectly holy life, and was assumed at its close in body as well as soul to the glory of Paradise, that there, reunited to her Divine Son, she might be enthroned beside Him, as Mother of the King of Angels and Saints, and crowned as their Queen. Besides, it was not fitting that the virginal body of Mary, of whom as His own true Mother the Divine Word had become incarnate, should ever see the corruption of the tomb.

Our Lady's glorious Assumption into heaven thus shows itself doctrinally contained in the primitive idea of Mary, the Second unfallen Eve: whilst early tradition testifies to a more or less explicit belief of the faithful as to the fact.

2. Mary, as the Second unfallen Eve, bore a great part in the work of man's Redemption, corresponding to that which the first Eve, by her transgression, had in his Fall. But here the better to illustrate our point, instead of drawing a contrast, we will suppose for the moment Eve to have remained unfallen, preserving her original state of innocence, and then on this hypothesis compare with her Mary, the Second Eve, in the office and effects of each as regards the human race.

Had both Adam and Eve remained unfallen, Eve would have shared with her husband in the grace and blessedness of being not only the natural, but also the spiritual parents of the human family conceived and born in the state of original justice derived from Adam. Eve would thus, in a true and supernatural sense, have verified her name as *Mother of all the living*,* instead of being, as she proved herself in fact to be, the Mother of all the dead, who died in Adam. Whereas, Mary the Second Eve, is really the Mother of all the living, that is to say, of all the redeemed, who in Christ are made alive.

Had Eve remained unfallen, her chief solicitude would surely have been that all the human family of which she was Mother, should persevere in their happy and holy state. She would have

* *Gen.* iii. 20.

used all diligence, and every means that her maternal love might suggest, to preserve her children from the danger of losing God's grace through disobedience to His commands. And were any child of her's to incur so great a misery, how intense would be then her grief! Must not that holy mother—if so to do accorded with the Divine Will—out of compassion for her perishing child plead earnestly for mercy in his behalf. But however this might be, Mary the Second Eve is set forth in the Church's primitive idea of her as the advocate of guilty Eve, and a cause of salvation not to her alone, but to all her children who were fallen in Adam. This means, that God was graciously pleased to accept by anticipation the merit of Mary's faith and obedience as an intercessory plea for the pardon of their sins in union with the infinitely meritorious and satisfactory obedience of the Second Adam, Jesus Christ her Son. It means, that when Eve had forfeited her right to be called the Mother of the living, and was with all her posterity subject to death, the Woman, thereupon foretold by God as the true Eve, had already in His Divine prevision made good her title, and borne her part as that Mother of the living who should restore lost life to the dead; and that already by anticipation were her pleadings for her children of avail in His sight.

The Sacrifice of the Cross—being that of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world—was retrospective in its fruits. Whilst efficacious for the pardon of the sins of all men in every antecedent generation, pre-eminently did it atone for the sin of Adam, in whom as their father and head, all the rest of men had sinned; and of whom the Divine Redeemer bore the name, and was Himself the antitype. In like manner, Mary's advocacy in behalf of sinners, that is to say, the whole part she took with her Divine Son in the work of Redemption, was also retrospective. And whilst as Mother both of the Redeemer and His redeemed, she is in truth the advocate of all, yet emphatically is she called the advocate of Eve, whose name she bore, and who as mother in the natural order of the whole human family co-operated most with Adam in its ruin.

But if Mary's advocacy in behalf of sinners had by anticipation so great avail, even before she had herself any real existence at all, how much more powerful must that advocacy be now, after she has acquired her rich store of virtues, after the consummation of that intimate union which she has, as His Mother, with the Incarnate Word; after her actual co-operation in the work of

man's Redemption, after her realised motherhood of the redeemed, and her exaltation to glory—now, too, that that advocacy is everywhere so fully known, and so constantly and fervently invoked by her children.

Had Eve, instead of sinning and contributing to our ruin, borne her part with Adam in securing to us the heritage of original innocence and grace, how should we not all, as children of such a mother, have cherished her memory with grateful veneration and love! Now it is precisely because Mary, God's own Virgin Mother, is become, as the Second Eve, our spiritual Mother and advocate of peace, and because, as such, she has done and still does so much for our salvation, that the Church has decreed to her so great honour, and proclaims so loudly the power of her intercession. Hence it is that her faithful children in every generation are wont to bless and praise her with filial love and ardent devotion, profess such lively confidence in her powerful protection, seek continually graces and favours through her mediation, and invoke her in their straits and dangers as their Mother of Mercy, the Advocate, Hope, and Refuge of sinners, Consoler of the Afflicted, and Help of Christians.

In thus developing the primitive idea of Mary as the Second Eve, we have given the sum of all those titles and prerogatives which have at any time furnished matter for the Church's explicit doctrinal teaching on Our Blessed Lady, and been the ground of that veneration and devotion which the faithful have shown to Mary in every age.

We purpose in succeeding chapters to dwell more at length on the several points contained in this summary, and to illustrate their recognition and place in the early Church by quotations from the Fathers of the first six centuries.

Besides those which we now append on Mary as the Second Eve many others bearing on this point will be found in the course of our work.

Besides the passages already cited from S. Justin, S. Irenæus, and Tertullian, we give the following from other Fathers.

THE AUTHOR OF THE EPISTLE TO DIOGNETUS.

After likening the Church to the garden of paradise, the writer goes on to say :—

"Here are goods wherewith the Serpent meddles not, wherein error has no part. Here no Eve is seduced; but a Virgin shows her faith (πιστεύεται)."*

S. THEOPHILUS, Bishop of Antioch.

"Since this Eve was deceived of old by the serpent, and became the beginner of sin, the evil-working demon who is also called Satan, who then spoke to her through the serpent, and who works even until now in those men that are influenced by him, calls on her as Eve. Now the devil is also called the dragon from his having revolted (ἀποδεδράκεναι) from God. For he was at first an angel."†

ORIGEN.

"Before John Elisabeth prophesies; before our Lord and Saviour's birth Mary prophesies. And just as sin began from a woman, and then found its way even to man: so too the beginning of salvation had its origin from women, that the rest of women laying aside the weakness of their sex might imitate the life and conversation of these blessed women."‡

"It behoved me (Elisabeth) to come to thee, for thou art above all other women blessed; thou the Mother of my Lord, thou my Lady, who bearest the undoing of the curse."§

S. GREGORY THAUMATURGUS.

"Meekly then did grace make election of the pure Mary alone out of all generations. For truly she proved herself prudent in all things; neither has any woman been born like her in all generations. She was not like the primeval virgin Eve, who, keeping holiday (χόρευσα) alone in paradise with thoughtless mind, hearkened unguardedly to the word of the serpent, the author of all evil, and thus became depraved in the thoughts of her mind; and, through that deceiver discharging his poison and infusing death with it, brought it into the whole world. From this source, it was, has arisen all the trouble of the saints. But in the holy Virgin is the fall of that (first mother) repaired."‖

* *Ep. ad Diognet.* in fin. P. Gr. Tom. 2, p. 1185. The passage is obscure and probably corrupt; but the comparison of the Church to Paradise, and the allusion to Mary, are plain. For an analogous use of the passive of πιστεύω, see S. Justin, *Apol.* 2, 10. The two last chapters of the Epistle are, however, held by many critics to be doubtfully genuine, though of the same early period.

† *Ad Autolycum.* L. ii. 28. Tom. 6, p. 1097. We have quoted this passage, because it identifies the dragon in the Apocalyptic vision (*Apoc.* xii.) with the serpent in paradise, and consequently also the woman who should be Mother of the promised Seed in Genesis with the woman who brought forth the Man-child in the Apocalypse.

‡ *In Luc.* Hom. vii. Tom. 13, p. 1819.

§ *Fragment. in Luc. Ib.* p. 1902.

‖ *Hom. I. in B. M. V.* Int. Opp. S. Greg. Thaum. Patr. Gr. Tom. 20, p. 120.

"Hail, thou full of grace! Be not ashamed, as if thou wert the cause of our condemnation. For thou art made the Mother of Him who is at once our Judge and our Redeemer. Hail, thou stainless Mother of the Bridegroom of a world bereft! Hail, thou that hast sunk in thy womb the death (that came) of the mother (Eve)! Hail, thou equal home of heaven and earth alike. Hail, thou amplest receptacle of the illimitable nature." *

S. CYRIL OF JERUSALEM.

"Since through Eve, a virgin, came death, it behoved that through a Virgin, or rather from a Virgin, should life appear. That as the Serpent had deceived the one, so Gabriel might bring good tidings to the other." †

"Eve being born from Adam's side without a mother, Jesus Christ was born from His Mother without father. For the female sex owed a debt to man; and this Mary paid by giving birth to Jesus Christ of herself alone, by the Holy Ghost, through the power of God." ‡

S. GREGORY OF NYSSA.

"The woman hath made an excuse for the woman. . . . The one through the wood brought in sin: the other through the wood brought in against it a blessing." §

S. AMPHILOCHIUS.

"By a Virgin has the world been set free, which had of old through a virgin fallen under sin." ||

S. EPHREM.

"Brethren, sons of Eve, let us listen to the fall of our first Mother, a fall which Mary repaired. . . . Through Eve the beautiful and desirable glory of man was extinguished; but through Mary it has revived." ¶

"The foolish mother is the fountain of our miseries, but her prudent sister is the treasury of our joys." **

"Adam by means of the new Eve entered again into paradise." ††

"It is plain that Mary is the gate of life, because by her the world and its inhabitants have been illumined, who had been darkened by Eve the cause of all evils. They are like to a body, one eye of which is blind and darksome, and the other pure and luminous, enlightening all things. So, to the world are affixed two eyes: Eve the blind eye, the left; whilst Mary is the eye full

* *Hom. III. in B. M. V. Ib.* pp. 139-142. These Homilies are of doubtful genuineness.

† *Catech.* xii. 15. Pat. Gr. Tom. 33, p. 741.

‡ *Ib.* 29, p. 761.

§ Opp. vol. iii. p. 352 b, ap. Morris, *Select Works of S. Ephrem*, p. 36.

|| *Orat. in Occurs. Dom.* P. G. Tom. 34, p. 57.

¶ *Opp. Syr.* ii. p. 318.

** *Ib.* p. 321.

†† *Ib.* p. 326.

of light, the right. . . . The eye is by the light made bright at the access thereof, and gains splendour by its means, and fairness by its rising, and brilliance by its brilliancy, and comeliness by its beauteousness. Mary is typified by the eye. Light dwelt within her and purified her thoughts and cleared her virginity. The river that baptised Him was again a type of His Conception; the soft womb of the water conceived Him in purity, and brought Him forth in brilliancy, and raised Him up in glory. In the pure bosom mayest thou learn of the daughter of our race, who conceived without man, and brought forth without seed, and brought up by the Gift the Lord of the Gift. The rising was in His river, the brightness in His sepulchre, and the rays He gave out on the top of the Mount; and His rising light, in the womb; and He glistened, in His lifting up, and was bright, in His Ascension. Brightness did Moses put on; he was clad with Him from without. The river wherein He was baptised put on brightness from within. The body in which He dwelt was made brilliant from within, as Moses was from the glory." *

"Thou dost not hide thyself in thy bareness, Pearl! With the love of thee is the merchant ravished also, for he strippeth off his garment, not to cover thee, seeing thy clothing is thy light, thy garment is thy brightness, O thou that art bared! Thou art like Eve who was clothed with nakedness. Cursed be he that deceived her and stripped her and left her. The serpent cannot strip off thy glory. In the mysteries that thou typifiest, women are clothed with light in Eden." †

"Travail Adam on the woman brought that from him had come forth. She to-day her travail ransomed, who to us a Saviour bare. To Eve our mother birth a man gave, who had no birth himself. How much more should Eve's daughter be believed to have borne a Child without a man. The virgin earth, she bare that Adam that was head over the earth. The Virgin bare to-day the Adam that was head over the heavens. The staff of Aaron it budded, and the dry wood yielded fruit. Its mystery is cleared up to-day, for virgin womb a Child hath borne." ‡

"With the weapon of the deceiver, the First-born clad Himself, that with the weapon that killed, He might restore to life again. With the tree wherewith He slew us, He delivered us. With the wine which maddened us, with it were we made chaste. With the rib that was drawn out of Adam (*i.e.* Eve), the wicked one drew out the heart of Adam. There arose from the Rib (*i.e.* Mary) a hidden power, which cut off Satan as Dagon: for in that Ark (Mary again) a Book was written that cried and proclaimed concerning the Conqueror." §

* *Ib.* p. 328, Morris, p. 86, n.f.

† "That is," explains Fr. Morris, "with the mysteries, typified in the pearl, women are clothed with light at Baptism, and have the robe of righteousness, which was lost through Eve, have Him who is Light, and are restored to Paradise."—*The Pearl*, Rhythm iii. Morris, p. 92. "Upon Genesis (p. 27 c.) S. Ephrem notices how Adam, when in paradise, had a brightness like to Moses, to overcome the creatures; and at p. 31 f. that Eve after sin was not immediately stripped of this glory, that Adam's faith might be tried also, and that he might not be frightened at seeing her countenance fallen." P. 51, note y.

‡ *In Nat. Dom.* Serm. i. 396, Morris, p. 2.

§ *Ib.* Serm. iii. Morris, p. 20.

"Eve with that vile and worthless serpent was not minded, glorious as she was, to turn his words back upon him; although his words were very questionable, and should have been fused in the assay furnace. As she had splendour, he had vileness. Marvel we at Mary, who questioned even the great Angel, and dreaded not; who asked him, and feared not. Eve was not minded to question even the vile serpent that had no feet: the Virgin answered Gabriel. Mary did not question in order to pry into the Son of the Living One. It was about a mortal that she asked, since none knew her. Mary asked about things easy to the True One: Eve received all manner of difficulties of a promiser. The mother of no discretion is the fountain of our troubles; and the Sister of understanding is the store-house of our joys. The serpent, who ought to have been questioned, was not pried into, and Christ, who ought to be believed, is pried into." *

"In her virginity Eve put on the leaves of shame. Thy Mother put on in her virginity the garment of Glory that sufficeth for all. She gave the little vest of the Body to Him that covereth all. Blessed is she in whose heart and mind Thou wast. A King's palace she was by Thee, O Son of the King, and a Holy of Holies by Thee, O High Priest. . . . Eve, again, was a nest and a cave for the accursed serpent that entered in and dwelt in her. His evil counsel became bread to her that she might become dust. Thou art our Bread, and Thou art also of our race, and our garment of glory." †

"Eve lifted up her eyes from hell and rejoiced in that day, because the Son of her daughter as a medicine of life came down to raise up the mother of His Mother. Blessed Babe that bruised the head of the serpent that smote her." ‡

"In the beginning by the sin of our first parents, death passed upon all men; to-day through Mary we are translated from death unto life. In the beginning, the serpent filled the ears of Eve, and the poison spread thence through the whole body. To-day, Mary through her ears received the Champion of eternal happiness. What, therefore, was an instrument of death, has been also one of life." §

"Two women flowered in innocence and simplicity, Mary and Eve; the one was the source of our salvation, the other of our death." ||

S. EPIPHANIUS.

"She it is who is signified by Eve, who received in figure the appellation of Mother of all living. For Eve was called Mother of the living even after having heard the words: *Dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return*, subsequent to the transgression. It is, indeed, a marvel that after the fall she had this great title given to her. True it is, according to the exterior, the whole race of man upon earth was born from this Eve; but in reality it is from Mary that Life is truly born to the world, so that by giving birth to the Living One,

* *Ib.* p. 321 c. Morris, p. 396.

† *Ib.* p. 430. Morris, *Rhythm* xii. p. 53.

‡ *Ib.* viii. Morris, p. 42.

§ *Serm. de laud. Mariæ.* i. Opp. Gr. et Lat. iii. p. 607.

|| *In Genes.* T. 5. Op. p. 327. Ap. Malou, *L'Immaculée Conception.* T. ii. p. 21, ed. 1857.

Mary might also become *the Mother of all living*. Thus then in a mystical sense Mary is called Mother of the living. Concerning these two women it was said: *Who hath given to woman wisdom, or knowledge of weaving?** Since, on the one hand, the first wise Eve devised material garments for Adam, whom she had made to be naked—for to her was given this toil. And because through her it was that the nakedness was discovered, to her it was given to clothe that body thus exposed to visible nakedness. But to Mary was it given by God to bear for us a lamb and sheep, that out of the glory of that same lamb and sheep might be wrought for us, as from a fleece, in wisdom through its virtue, a garment of immortality.

"There is, moreover, something else wonderful to contemplate here about Eve and Mary. Eve became an occasion of death to man, since through her it was that death entered into the world; but Mary an occasion of life, for through her was born to us Life, so that instead of death there might be life, to ward off that death which came by woman, through the birth of Him—once more by woman—who has thus become life to us. And as Eve in the garden whilst still a virgin fell into the sin of disobedience, so again by the Virgin came the obedience of grace, when she received the glad tidings of the coming down from heaven of the Incarnate Word and of life eternal. For there God says to the serpent: *And I will put enmity between thee and between her, and between thy seed, and between her seed.* But nowhere is (such) seed of woman to be found. Hence evidently to Eve mystically must be referred the enmity to her posterity, of the serpent and the devil, and that envy of his contained in the serpent." †

"Eve brought ruin on God's creatures by means of the transgression: allured as she was by the serpent's speech and promise, led astray from the commandment and perverted in mind. For this cause the Lord and Saviour of all, wishing to heal the sore, build up what was fallen to ruin, and redress what was gone wrong, of a Virgin woman Himself was born, that He might banish death, supply what was wanting, and perfect what was impaired." ‡

S. AMBROSE.

"It is well to recall to mind, how from paradise the first Adam was cast forth into the desert, that thou mayest remark how the Second Adam returned to paradise. . . . From virgin earth Adam, Christ from the Virgin. . . . By the woman folly, by the Virgin wisdom. Death by the tree, life by the cross."§ . . .

"What hast thou gained, O devil, by hiding the wood, but again to be vanquished? Mary vanquished thee when she conceived the Conqueror . . . Christ visited woman in Mary . . . Mary was visited that she might liberate Eve." ‖

"As a cloud Mary rained upon the earth the grace of Christ. . . . The

* *Job* xxxviii. 36. An ancient Greek rendering of the text, quite different from that of the Vulgate.

† *Hær.* 78, n. 19. Patr. Gr. Tom. 42, p. 728.

‡ *Hær.* 69, 9.

§ *Exposit. in Luc.* Lib. iv. n. 7.

‖ *De obitu Theodosii*, n. 44-46.

shower of this sacred cloud our fathers announced to us would be the world's salvation. . . . This rain quenched the appetite of Eve: this unguent wiped away the stench of hereditary error." *

"Reflect, my children, who it was that the Lord Jesus, in coming upon earth, chose to be His Mother. When about to give salvation to the world, He came by a Virgin, and by a Virgin's childbirth He undid the woman's faults. May also your virginal integrity undo my errors. . . . Who will not call blessed . . . who will not honour the Mother of so many virgins? Who will not venerate the Court of chastity?" †

"It is no wonder if the Lord, being about to redeem the world should begin His work with Mary; that she by whom salvation was prepared for all might herself first receive the fruit of salvation as a pledge (ex pignore)." ‡

"By a woman came or trouble, by a Virgin took place salvation." §

"But if that first man who conversed with God when in paradise could fall so easily, though created of earth that was virgin, which had at the word of God been formed and created of recent origin, and was not as yet through our flesh condemned to the curse of obnoxious heritage, how much more we," etc. ‖

"But why should I speak of how great is the grace of virginity, which merited to be chosen by Christ, to be even the corporal temple of God, wherein, as we read, *dwelt all the fulness of the Godhead?* . . . In the Virgin Christ found what He wished to be His, what the Lord of all should assume to Himself. By a man and a woman was flesh cast forth from paradise; by a Virgin is it united to God." ¶

"Hear, most dearly beloved brethren, what is the mystery of the Law. The first man was from earth and heaven; the Second from heaven and earth; the latter from God and Mary, and so from earth; the former from the earth and the Spirit, and so from heaven. Yet both one and the other from a virgin, and without carnal intercourse. One from an inviolate Virgin, the other from pure unsown earth, that knew nor plough nor rain. By the first man life was lost, by the second restored. The first man lost grace received, the second with life brought back grace; the first fell by the suasion of a virgin; the second by a Virgin's childbirth raised up what lay fallen: the first by sinning brought the punishment of death, the second by suffering bestowed pardon: the first for guilt was cast forth from paradise, the second for glory was crucified by the world.

"Hence evil by woman, nay rather by woman good; for by Eve we fell, by Mary we stand: prostrated by Eve, raised up by Mary; by Eve reduced to slavery, by Mary made free. Eve took from us length of days, Mary restored to us immortality; Eve caused us to be condemned by an apple of the tree, Mary wrought our pardon by the gift of the tree; because Christ also hung upon the tree as fruit.

"As therefore we died through a tree, so by a tree are we brought to life.

* *De Instit. Virg.* xiii. 81-84.
† *Exhortatio Virginitatis*, cap. iv. 26, 27.
‡ *In Luc.* iii. 17, P. L. Tom. 17, p. 1640.
§ *Ep.* 42, 3.
‖ *Ep.* 45.
¶ *Ep.* 63, n. 33.

A tree showed us our nakedness, a tree clothed us with leaves of pardon. A tree excited the heat of sins, the tree of knowledge clad us with cooling refreshment for our sins; a tree brought forth thorns and briers, the tree of knowledge hope and salvation. . . . O mystery of the sacraments of Mary. O teaching hidden to unbelievers, and revealed to the faithful. The Immortal builds up a mortal: she brings forth the Immortal. The Incorporeal finds His place on earth, the corporeal in heaven; God is made man, but is shown to be God. All that was done by Adam is washed out by Mary. Hence happy Eve, by whom was given the occasion; yea, rather happy Mary, by whom was offered the cure; happy Eve, by whom is born the people; happier Mary, by whom was born Christ. Hence, whilst He is better to one, both indeed are glorious; for Christ would not have made Mary glad, had He not deformed the former Eve from whom too Mary was herself born: nor would He have come to the people, had she not first sinned in the world. The one is called mother of mankind, the other of salvation. Eve taught us a lesson, and Mary gave us strength. By Eve we grow, by Mary we reign: by Eve we were brought down to earth, by Mary we are raised to heaven; and with the view of briefly making plain the whole mystery of the Law, I shall show the intimate relation of these two women to one another, and with them of all: how of old Mary was in Eve, and afterwards Eve was revealed by Mary." *

S. AUGUSTINE.

"*Hail Mary, full of grace: Blessed art thou amongst women.* In saying, *Full of grace*, he showed that the wrath of the first sentence was entirely removed (ex integro iram exclusam primæ sententiæ), and the full grace of benediction restored. In saying, *Blessed art thou amongst women*, he expressed what was the blessed fruit of her virginity. . . . For Eve, who once was cursed, has now, we believe, through Mary returned to the glory of benediction." †

"For man's deception he was given to drink poison by woman; for man's restoration let salvation be given him to drink by woman. Let woman compensate for the sin of man through her deceived, by giving birth to Christ." ‡

"Because man fell through the female sex, by the female sex was man restored. Because a Virgin had given birth to Christ, a woman announced His resurrection. By woman death, by woman life." §

"Eve by her disobedience merited punishment; Mary by obeying obtained glory. The one through tasting what was forbidden was cursed; the other by believing was blessed." ‖

"The first man, by persuasion of a virgin, fell; the Second Man, with consent of a Virgin, triumphed. By a woman the devil brought in death; by a woman the Lord brought in life. An evil angel of old seduced Eve, a good angel likewise encouraged Mary. Eve believed, so as to ruin her husband:

* *Sermo* xlv. *De primo Adam et Secundo.* Int. opp. S. Ambros. Its author is unknown.

† Serm. 123, 2, *De Natali Domini*, vii. Int. opp. S. Augustini, Appendix.

‡ Serm. 51 (al. *De divers.* 63), c. 2. P. L. Tom. 57, p. 335.

§ Serm. 232 (al. *De tempore*, 44), cap. 2. *Ib.* p. 1108.

‖ Serm. 10, *In Natal. Dom.* iii.

Mary, so as to prepare her womb to be a habitation worthy of the Son of God, that Him whom she had as Lord, she might have also as Son. Eve perished by a word; to the Word likewise did Mary commit herself; and what had perished she repaired. What Eve did by her ill-believing, Mary by her good-believing blotted out. From a woman was the beginning of sin, and on her account we all die; from a woman was the beginning of faith, and on her account are we repaired unto everlasting life." *

"It is a great sacrament that, whereas through woman death became our portion, so to us by woman life was born: that in the case of both sexes male and female, the baffled devil might be tormented, who on their overthrow had rejoiced. Since his punishment had been small, if in us both sexes had been liberated, without our being liberated by means of both." †

"Elisabeth conceived a man, and Mary a Man—Elisabeth the mother of John, Mary the Mother of Christ—but Elisabeth one who was only a man, Mary one who was both God and Man. A marvel it is how a creature could conceive the Creator. What then are we to understand, my brethren, but that He made for Himself flesh from a Mother alone, He who made the first man without father and mother. That first man was our ruin, when the woman through whom we died, conceived in her heart the serpent's poison. For the serpent tempted to sin, and through his evil tempting obtained admission. If the first man was our ruin, when the woman conceived in her heart the serpent's poison; we should not wonder that our salvation was wrought, when a woman conceived in her womb the flesh of the Omnipotent. Both sexes had fallen; both had to be repaired. By a woman we had been given over to destruction; by a woman was salvation restored to us." ‡

"Since the devil through the serpent spoke to Eve, and through the ears of Eve brought death to the world; God, through the Angel, brought the word to Mary, and thus shed life on all ages. The Angel cast the word, and the Virgin conceived Christ. . . . With this splendour is the Son of God conceived; with this purity is He generated. . . . The Physician from heaven passing through the Virgin, after His passing, caused the Virgin to remain unscathed. For He who was able to restore the dislocated bodily members in others by His touch, how much more could He not by His birth preserve inviolate in His own Mother what He found intact? For through her childbirth her corporal integrity increased rather than diminished; and her virginity was rather greatly enhanced, than impaired." §

S. MAXIMUS.

"Christ is born of Mary, both that the female sex might give man, and virginal integrity bring forth God. Christ is born of a woman, that as Adam was unable to provide against the devil who deceived him by means of Eve, so the devil might not discover God to be present at His coming by means of Mary. A woman therefore gives birth to the salvation of the world, that she

* Serm. 28, *In Nat. Dom.* xx. See also xxi. and xxvi.
† *De Agon. Christi*, c. 24.
‡ Serm. 289. *In Nat. Joan. Bapt.*, iii. 2.
§ Serm. 123. *In Nat. Dom.* vii. 1. Append.

who had shown herself an incentive to iniquity, might become a ministress of justice, and by her, through whom death opened for itself an entrance into this world, life might find access to us. And that the Creator of the human race, and of both the sexes, might show the care that He has for both sexes. A man is born and comes forth from a woman that thus we might be reminded that there is with God no distinction between man and woman in obtaining salvation. And why should we not believe with all devotion, that a Saviour Child could be born of a Virgin, since we believe that a perfect man was formed from the dust?" *

One ancient author calls Mary:—

"The one and only daughter of life." †

And another:—

"The new Eve and mother of life." ‡

S. JEROME.

"When the virgin conceived in her womb, and brought forth a Child for us . . . the curse was done away. Death by Eve, life by Mary." §

"The plenitude of all the grace which is in Christ came to Mary, though in another way. And therefore he says: *Blessed art thou amongst women*, that is, more blessed than all women. And by reason of this the malediction which was infused by means of Eve, was entirely taken away by the blessing pronounced on Mary." ‖

S. JOHN CHRYSOSTOM.

"A virgin cast us forth from paradise; through a Virgin we have found eternal life. By what things we were condemned, by these same are we cured." ¶

"To-day we celebrate a glorious triumph of victory. . . . Let us then all rejoice, exult, and be glad. . . . For He hath wrought all for our salvation; and by what things the devil worsted us, by these same did Christ overcome him. He took those same arms, and with them He prostrated him. And how? Listen. A virgin, wood, and death were the symbols of our defeat. For Eve was a virgin, since she had not yet known man when she was deceived. The wood was the tree. Death was the punishment pronounced on Adam. Thou seest how a virgin, wood, and death were the symbols of our defeat. Now see how these very same are the cause of our victory. Instead of Eve, Mary. Instead of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, the wood of the Cross. Instead of Adam's death, the Lord's Death." **

* Hom. *De Natiu. Dom.* xv. Patr. Lat. Tom. 57, p. 253. See also Serm. xiii. pp. 638-640 and Serm. xi. and xii. int. Opp. *Append.* pp. 864-869.

† *Epist. ad Paul. Samos.* attributed to S. Dionysius of Alexandria.

‡ *Serm. de Annunt. Deip.* int. Opp. S. Athanasii.

§ *Ep.* 22, *ad Eustoch.* 21.

‖ *De Assump. B. M. V. Int. Opp. S. Hieron.*

¶ *Exposit. in Ps.* xliv. P. G. Opp. Tom. 5, p. 193.

** *Hom. in S. Pasch.* ii. Tom. 52, p. 767.

"What then? Is the female sex doomed to sentence of condemnation, kept in sorrows, and the bond not loosed? Christ has come, who looses the bond. She who brought forth the Lord has presented herself as advocate for the sex (*ὑπὲρ τοῦ γένους ἀπολογουμένη*), the holy Virgin in place of the virgin. For Eve too was a virgin when she sinned. The former loosed the sorrow and the groaning of her who was condemned. For just as when any one is called to the regal court, he is eager to confer honours on those who belong to him, and, should they be in distress, to deliver them. So the holy Virgin when called to the regal court to minister to the divine generation, and brought to an unexampled childbirth, asks this first favour, nay rather she is given it. For since it befitted not the woman under condemnation to bring forth the Innocent (*τὸν ἀνεύθυνον*), he comes, who first will loose Eve's sorrow by joy. The angel comes saying to the Virgin, *Hail, full of grace.* Thus then by the *Hail*, does he loose the bond of sorrow. *Hail:* he has come to loose the sorrow. *Hail, full of grace:* because until now, subject to the curse. Pay attention here to the grace of God. *Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with thee*, For whereas, with her was the serpent, in sorrow: with thee is God. And see the word of the angel, how he interprets the whole economy of Christ. *Hail, full of grace.* Because she received a double curse, sorrow, and childbirth in pangs, he now brings in a childbirth that will loose that childbirth: *Behold thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and shalt bring forth a Son, and thou shalt call His name Jesus. For He shall save His people from their sins.** The sins of thy fathers He looses, who from thee blossoms forth the fruit. Henceforth all is changed. Hitherto, those who hear of Eve bewail her: Alas for the wretched one, from what glory has she fallen! Alas for the wretched one, how greatly has she suffered! And now every day is Mary in the mouth of all called Blessed: filled, verily, is she with the Holy Ghost. Hear, in fact, what the Virgin herself in prophecy says. *Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, because He hath regarded the humility of His handmaid: for from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed.* In order thus to show that she bears the person of Eve: Me, she says, until now despised, henceforth shall all generations call Blessed. But what difference, you may ask, will it make to her, if she does not hear? Nay, but she does most certainly hear, since she is now in a place that is all light, in the land of the living, the Mother of our salvation, the source of that Light that is perceptible both sensibly and intellectually, sensibly by reason of His Flesh, intellectually by reason of His Divinity. Thus, therefore, is she proclaimed altogether Blessed. Nay even whilst still living in the flesh, she was called blessed. For she heard of her blessedness whilst still in the flesh. She it was who first saw and then tasted of the tree; she first spoke, and then heard, her blessedness. For when the Saviour was teaching, a certain woman from the crowd lifted up her voice, and said to Him in the hearing of all, *Blessed is the womb that bare Thee, and the paps that Thou hast sucked.*" †

* *Luke* i. 28, 31. *Matt.* i. 21.

† *De Mundi Creatore*, Orat. vi. 10. Int. Opp. S. Chrysost. Tom. vi. p. 497, Migne. It is considered certain that the author of this treatise was Severianus, Bishop of Gabala, in Syria, at one time the friend, afterwards the adversary of S. Chrysostom.

S. PETER CHRYSOLOGUS.

In a mystical interpretation of the raising of Lazarus, *John* xi., the Saint says as follows :—

"Christ had care of woman first, since the tempter infected her first. He banishes perfidy from woman, and restores faith to woman, that she who had wrought perdition might be also the ministress of salvation; and at length, through God she might be mother of the living, who so long, through the devil, had been mother of the dead. And since woman had been the beginning of evil, He deals with death in such wise as first to do away with the charge before granting pardon, and annul the prosecution, before pronouncing the sentence. He takes precaution too, lest man should refuse to admit woman, by whom he had been once deceived, to have her share with him in life; and so woman should perish, to the loss of many, had Christ the Lord reached man first.* Hence it is, brethren, that Christ is born by means of woman; hence it is that woman raises man up from the sepulchre of her womb, that with dolours she may recall him whom she made an exile of by her blandishments; and by her weeping restore whom she ruined by her eating. At last when Martha had confessed to Christ,† and by her holy confession blotted out whatever there was of fault in the person of woman, she is sent to Mary, because without Mary neither death could be done away, nor life restored. Let Mary come, let her come who bears the name of Mother, that man may know that Christ dwelt in the secret of her virginal womb, to the end that the dead might go forth from hell, that the dead might go out from the sepulchres."‡

"A woman received from God the leaven of faith; since a woman had received from the devil the leaven of unbelief. She hid it in three measures, that is to say, in the three periods of mankind, *viz.*, from Adam to Noe, from Noe to Moses, from Moses to Christ: that woman, who had corrupted by the leaven of death the whole mass of mankind in Adam, might by the leaven of the resurrection repair the whole mass of our flesh in Christ; that woman,

* "Our Lord Jesus Christ, the Wisdom of the Father, restored what was lost, in the same order wherein it had fallen. Woman fell by sin before man; it was therefore fitting that woman should be restored before man. S. Augustine says: 'The commandment from the Lord was by Adam, and thence to woman; but sin from the devil was by woman, and thence to man' (*De Gen. ad lit.* L. ii. c. 54), and again: 'The penalty was given first to woman, and then to man' (c. 37). So, if the Redeemer had come to man before woman, the woman would have remained on in her sick state, and the wonted order of reparation would not have been kept. Or at any rate man in displeasure might have refused to have as partner, in the life acquired by divine reparation, her whom he had experienced to be the source of evil unto death. . . . But how, thou askest, or when did Christ come first to woman before man? When through the aforeseen merits of Christ who was to come, the Eternal Word chose for Himself the Blessed Virgin for His Mother, and made her exempt from all stain of sin. Or then, it was, Christ the Lord came to the woman, when the Angel Gabriel was sent by God. For then the Blessed Virgin was earnestly praying to God, that He would come down to redeem the human race, as He had promised by the Prophets," etc. (Mita in loc. ap. Migne.)

† *i.e.* Confessed His Divinity.

‡ *Serm.* 64, T. 52, p. 380. Patr. Lat. Migne.

who had made bread of groans and sweat, might provide the bread of life and salvation; and might be Mother of all the living by Christ, she who was mother of all the dead in Adam. Since for this cause Christ willed to be born, that as death came to all by Eve, so life might return to all by Mary. Mary it is who fulfils the type of this leaven, sets off the parable, and verifies the figure; in that she received from on high the leaven of the Word, and in her virgin womb, yea in her virgin womb, brought together into a one whole (in massam) His human flesh."

What the holy doctor goes on to say illustrates a later chapter of this work, Mary and the Church, but we give it here in order not to separate it from its context:—

"Let us now show another allegorical meaning of this parable. The woman who took the leaven is the Church: the leaven she received is the mystery of heavenly doctrine: the three measures in which she is said to have hid the leaven are the Law, the Prophets, and the Gospel," etc.*

"Blessed art thou amongst women: for amongst women, on whose womb Eve, who was cursed, brought punishment, Mary being blest, rejoices, is honoured, and looked up to. And now through grace is truly made mother of the living, woman, who had been by nature mother of the dying. . . . Heaven feels awe of God, angels tremble at Him, the creature sustains Him not, nature sufficeth not, and yet one maiden so takes, receives, entertains Him as a guest within her bosom, that, for the very hire of her home, and as the price of her womb, she asks, she obtains peace for the earth, glory for the heavens, salvation for the lost, life for the dead, a heavenly parentage for the earth-born, and the union of God Himself with human flesh." †

"The good Shepherd, the kind Shepherd, who had put in one sheep, that is to say, in Adam, the whole flock of mankind, set this sheep amidst the delights of paradise, in the region of living pasture. But it forgot the Shepherd's voice, through giving ear to the howling of wolves; it lost the salutary fold, and was all-wounded with deadly wounds. Christ, then, coming into the world to seek it found it in the Virgin's womb." ‡

S. PROCLUS.

"Let the woman haste hither, for the woman shows not the tree of death, but brings forth the tree of life: the virgins . . . the mothers also, for the Virgin Mother has amended the tree of disobedience by the tree of life. The female sex is no longer in execration, for it has obtained whereby it shall surpass even the angels in glory. Eve has been healed . . . and Mary is venerated (adored), because she has become mother and handmaid, cloud and chamber, and ark of the Lord. . . . For this cause let us say to her: *Blessed art thou amongst women*, who alone hast healed the grief of Eve; who alone hast borne the world's price." §

* *Serm.* 99, *Ib.* p. 478 sq.
† *Serm.* 140, *Ib.* p. 576. See especially *Serm.* 117, p. 520.
‡ *Serm.* 68, *Ib.* p. 641.
§ Orat. iv. and v. *In Natal. Dom.* P. G. Tom. 65, p. 710.

"Have we then to fight with a second Eve? Must we range our hosts against an immaculate woman?" *

S. ELEUTHERIUS TORNACENSIS.

"By Eve death came into the world, but by Mary is lost life restored. After the Virgin conceived Christ in her womb, Virgin she brought forth the Light that enlightens every man who comes into this world." †

* *Laudat. Deip.* n. 8, p. 634.
† *Serm. de Natal. Dom.* Tom. 65, p. 94.

CHAPTER II.

THE BLESSED VIRGIN IN THE SCRIPTURAL EXEGESIS OF THE FATHERS OF THE FIRST SIX CENTURIES.

We propose in this Chapter to illustrate the teaching of the early Fathers on Our Lady from their Scriptural exegesis. With this object we shall give numerous extracts from their writings, in which they interpret passages of Scripture of the Blessed Virgin, or apply them to her. The field is a large one. We occupy it thus early, both for its own sake, and also that the reader may have at once an ample storehouse containing rich treasures of very varied kind which the Fathers have laid at Mary's feet, but which from their close connection with the Sacred text could hardly bear sorting and rearrangement. This method will, moreover, have the advantage of presenting beforehand, in one general view, the sublime idea that the Fathers had of all those various excellencies and prerogatives of the Blessed Virgin, which in due course we shall treat of more fully in detail.

A sure test of the greater or less importance attached by the Fathers to any particular doctrinal matter would be the place they held it to occupy, and the recognition they claimed for it, in Holy Writ. Christ had Himself proclaimed that the Law of Moses, the Psalms and all the Scriptures spoke of Him.* The Apostles testified to the same truth.† To the mind of S. Paul, so much was the Divine Incarnate Word, the one central theme, the sum and substance of all former inspiration, that even the historical facts of the Old Testament seemed to derive for him their chief meaning and value from their being figurative of what was to meet with its fulfilment under the Gospel in the kingdom of Jesus Christ.‡

The early Fathers set themselves at once to develop this idea, and to show it forth in detail. Accordingly in their commen-

* *Luke* xxiv. 44-46. † 1 *Peter* i. 10-12. ‡ 1 *Cor.* x. 6-11.

taries, and explanations of particular texts, following out this view, they appear to press everything into their service, and to find the Incarnate Word, and what bears upon His person, character, and work, in every page of Scripture, whatever might be the nature of its subject-matter, whether historical, or allegorical, or prophetic, or didactic, or devotional, or moral, or ceremonial, or mystical. For all these, in patristic exegesis, are made to yield figures and types, predictions and allusions, referring directly or indirectly, to the mysteries of Redemption. We may grant that this mystical and figurative method was sometimes carried too far by early writers, that some of their interpretations are forced and strained, and their applications fanciful and arbitrary; we may doubt, moreover, whether in many cases they made them with any more serious end in view than that of pious accommodation, or mere illustration -still this very exaggeration serves to show how strong was their conviction that the doctrinal truths they thus illustrated, were deeply imbedded in the sense of Scripture, and though not apparent in the letter, were contained in its spirit: whilst the intimate association that was conceived of these truths with the Sacred text gives evidence of their importance in the mind of the writers.

As a consequence of dwelling so much on the mystical sense of Scripture, no doubt too little attention was bestowed by the earlier commentators on its literal and more obvious meaning. Hence by degrees a reaction set in, and a new school of interpretation took its rise, especially in the East under S. Chrysostom who brings out into greater prominence the literal sense of the Sacred text.

Whilst, however, the more general rule of these later commentators was to explain with greater fulness the primary and literal meaning of Scripture, they by no means ignored or passed over its mystical sense; for of this frequent applications are to be found in their writings. But besides their more literal method, what perhaps most distinguishes them from earlier Fathers, is their greater tendency to draw from the Sacred text moral lessons and practical conclusions, in place of such as were of a more mystical character. This is particularly noticeable in S. Chrysostom's commentaries, and almost at every turn, as we shall later on have occasion to show.

It is well remarked, as a characteristic note of those ecclesiastical writers who are most in esteem for their sanctity,

orthodox teaching, profound science of theology and Scriptural exegesis, that they have been ever forward to encourage the mystical, in addition to the literal, interpretation of the Sacred text; whereas, many authors held in less repute, have been prominent in discountenancing the mystical sense, and those of doubtful orthodoxy for the most part, wholly reject it. We know the mind of the Church on this matter from the frequent application that she makes of Holy Scripture in her Sacred books, and from the general language of her Liturgy.

There are two subjects which—next after Jesus Christ the Incarnate Word, and because they are most intimately connected with Him—come more generally prominent in the commentaries of the Fathers than any others: and these are His Blessed Mother and His holy Church. Other matters, doubtless, occupy more largely the attention of individual writers in their comments. But of patristic exegesis as a whole, these two are habitual themes, and seem to form, in the minds of the early Fathers, part of the very substance of Divine inspiration, or the most precious golden threads woven throughout its web.

Hence, as the Fathers find throughout all Scripture the Incarnate Word, so do they seem to discover everywhere and at every turn allusions to His Mother and His Church: and as they say that all the prophecies and types were fulfilled in Him, so also they speak—of course, with due measure of signification, and because of their intimate relation to Him—regarding Mary and the Church.

Though the Blessed Virgin is the sole theme of this work, we have here made mention of the Church in conjunction with her, because they are continually linked together by the Fathers in their Scriptural comments. Frequently the very same language and applications that they make use of for the one, are elsewhere in their writings referred to the other. From this, so to say, identification of Mary with the Church in the thought of the Fathers, many passages on the Church in their commentaries, may justly, we hold, be applied also to the Blessed Virgin, even though no distinct mention is made in them of her.

In patristic interpretation of Scripture the Church holds a much larger and more prominent part than Our Lady, as being the mystical Body of Christ, which was in a certain sense and in the moral order, the very end of the Incarnation itself; and of which Mary, though the queen and spiritual Mother, is herself but a fellow-member with ourselves. It is in their dogmatic

treatises that the Fathers dwell most on the Virgin Mother, and also in many of their writings that are of a more moral and devotional character, as we shall see later on.

We purpose in a future Chapter to dwell more at length on the patristic view of the relation between Mary and the Church.

The comments of the Fathers on passages from the Old Testament are given in their biblical order. With regard to the New Testament, they are, for the most part, grouped together under the several mysteries or events to which they are referable.

SCRIPTURAL EXEGESIS.

PART I. THE OLD TESTAMENT.

GENESIS.

"And God said: Let us make man to our image and likeness; and let him have dominion over the fishes of the sea," etc.—i. 26-28.

"But if we stop at the literal sense, how will you be able to show that the most glorious Mother of God is to the image and likeness of God? For where has she commanded or ruled over the visible animals, or the fishes, or birds, or the whole earth, she who fled away to Egypt from the face of Herod? Yet who, prithee tell me, of men or of devils will dare to say that she who is of the same essence together with God, as regards the flesh, is not to the image and likeness of Him who was born of her own self? For how is the Mother of such a Son not one who bears in herself intact and unimpaired the image of her offspring?" *

"The Lord God had not rained upon the earth; and there was not a man to till the earth. But a spring rose out of the earth, watering all the surface of the earth. And the Lord God formed man of the slime of the earth; and breathed into his face the breath of life, and man became a living soul. And the Lord God had planted a paradise of pleasure from the beginning: wherein He placed man whom He had formed. And the Lord God brought forth of the ground all manner of trees, fair to behold, and pleasant to eat of: the tree of life also in the midst of paradise: and the tree of knowledge of good and evil."—ii. 5-9.

* S. Anastas. Sinaita, *In Hexem.*, Lib. vi., P. G. Tom. 84, p. 936.

"The Son of God, says the Apostle, *was made of the seed of David according to the flesh:* * that is, as though of the mould of earth *when there was no man to till the earth.* For no man wrought in the Virgin of whom Christ was born. *But a spring rose out of the earth, watering all the face of the earth.* The face of the earth: that is, the dignity of the earth, whereby is most rightly understood the Mother of the Lord, the Virgin Mary, whom the Holy Spirit watered. For He is signified under the name of a spring and of water in the Gospel: as though Christ, made of such mould, was to be the Man set in paradise to work and keep it, that is to say, to perfect and keep it by the will of His Father." †

"As Adam, the first man made, had his substance from rude and still virgin earth—for God had not as yet rained upon the earth, and no man had worked it—and was fashioned by the hand of God, that is, by the Word of God; so likewise the same Word—who has His existence [according to His human nature] from Mary ever a Virgin—when recapitulating Adam in Himself, rightly received, by way of recapitulation, Adam's mode of generation. . . . But why then did He not take again slime of the earth, instead of causing the formation to be from Mary? This was, that whilst the new formation to be made was not to be different from the first formation which should be saved, but the same was to be recapitulated, yet that still it should be by way of similitude." ‡

"He who delivered lost man, who was *formed of earth*, and bound with the chains of death, from the lowest hell, the same was man's helper, Himself like to him—the First-begotten Word visiting *in the Virgin* our first parent Adam; the Spiritual, in the womb, seeking the earthly; the Ever-living, him by disobedience dead; the Celestial calling the terrestrial to things higher; the Noble wishing to grant liberty to the slave by His own obedience." §

"Above all is to be commended the reason which prescribed that the Son of God should be born of the Virgin. In a new way it behoved to be born the dedicator of a new birth; the sign whereof the Lord is by Isaias proclaimed as giving. And what is this sign? *Behold, a Virgin shall conceive in her womb, and bring forth a Son.* ‖ The Virgin therefore conceived, and brought forth Emmanuel, God with us. This is that new birth, whereby man is born in God, and God is born in man—in flesh of olden seed, yet conceived without olden seed, in order that with new seed, that is to say, spiritually, He might form that flesh anew, now expiated by the exclusion of the filth of its oldness. Now this entire newness was figured forth—as indeed in all things of old—by the rational disposition of the Lord being born by means of the Virgin. The earth was still virgin, not yet broken up by labour, nor yet prepared for sowing, and therefrom, we are told, man was made by God into a living soul. If then the first Adam was taken from earth; with good reason, likewise from earth, that is, from flesh not yet given over to generation, was the

* *Rom.* i. 3.

† S. Augustine, *De Genesi*, Lib. ii.

‡ S. Irenæus, *Hær.* L. iii. cap. xxi. 10.

§ S. Hippolytus, Ex *Serm. in Magn. Canticum*, ap. Theodoritum, *Dial.* ii.

‖ *Is.* vii. 14.

next, even the last Adam, in the words of the Apostle, made by God into a quickening spirit." *

"The word Eden signifies virgin land. Now such was that region in which God planted paradise. For it is written that *God planted a paradise in Eden towards the East,* † that thou mayest understand that paradise was not a work of human hands; since the earth was virgin, and had known no plough-share, nor was cut up by furrows; but without any tillage, at the command alone (of God) it put forth its vegetation and trees. For this cause He called it Eden, which means virgin soil. Now this virgin (earth) is a type of the Virgin. For as that land, without having received any seed, blossomed forth for us paradise; so too Mary, without having conceived of man, blossomed forth for us Christ. When then a Jew says to thee, How did a Virgin bring forth? say to him, How did the virgin earth put forth those marvellous trees?" ‡

"Since she (virginity) had fled from paradise departing after the transgression, Christ, in coming down from heaven, brought her back again; and restoring her as though an exile to her own native land, freed her from a long banishment. Hence on His first arrival, He was born of a Virgin, and changed the laws of nature; and thus from the very beginning of His life, He treated virginity with honour, making a Virgin His Mother." §

"The first man was created from virginal earth which had been formed and created of recent origin at the word of God, and was not yet congealed with parricidal blood and slaughters, polluted with crimes and shame, nor as yet with this flesh of ours condemned by the curse of guilty heredity (*damnata maledicto obnoxiæ hereditatis*)." ‖

"O Mary, most holy paradise in Eden, bearing fruit most beautiful and most pleasant. . . . Rejoice, O most blessed one, for ever and ever. Rejoice, O Virgin maid, thou tree of goodly foliage, whence we all gather the fruit, of which when we eat we are refreshed with gladness and do not die. . . . Hail, paradise of delights; hail, tree of life; hail, fountain of grace and immortality. . . ." ¶

"O earth unsown, that put forth the fruit of salvation! O Virgin, who surpassed even the paradise of pleasure itself. For it, indeed, produced the growth of vegetation from the plants that sprung up from virginal earth: but this Virgin is that better earth which brought not forth trees bearing apples, but the rod of Jesse, bringing to men the fruits of salvation. Now that earth was virgin, and this, too, virgin. In the one God commanded trees to grow up, but of this Virgin the Creator Himself was the offspring. As that earth received no planting anterior to the trees, so neither did Mary suffer any scath of virginity from her childbirth. More glorious than paradise was the Virgin:

* Tertullian, *De Carne Christi,* cap. xvii. See also *Contr. Judæos,* c. xiii., quoted *infra,* at *Ps.* lxvi. 7.

† *Gen.* ii. 8 (lxx.).

‡ S. Chrysostom, *De Mutatione Nominum* ii., Patr. Gr. Tom. 51, p. 129.

§ *De futuræ vitæ deliciis, Ib.,* p. 350.

‖ S. Ambrose, *Ennarat. in Cap.* ii. *Genes. de paradiso. Ad Sabinum.*

¶ S. Ephrem, *Orat. ad Deip.,* Opp. Græc. T. iii. pp. 529-547.

for whereas it was the culture of God, she cultured God Himself according to the flesh, when He willed to be united to the nature of man." *

"Mary is the ever-blooming paradise of incorruptibility, wherein is planted the tree that giveth life, and bringeth forth all the fruits of immortality." †

"The land of Hevilath, where gold groweth," etc.—ii. 12.

"What is this Hevilath, both a land and also gold? Is it not the holy Virgin, and her pure and spotless soul?" ‡

"And the Lord God said: It is not good for man to be alone; let us make him a help like unto himself."—ii. 18.

"The same Divine Goodness provided also a help-meet, that no good might be wanting. *It is not good for man,* He says, *to be alone.* For He knew that the sex of Mary would be profitable to Him, and afterwards to the Church." §

"The Lord God . . . took one of Adam's ribs . . . and built the rib . . . into a woman."—ii. 21, 22.

"With the rib that was drawn out of Adam, the wicked one drew out the heart of Adam. There arose from the *rib* [*i.e.*, Mary], a hidden power which cut off Satan as Dagon. || For in that ark [Mary again], a book was hidden that cried and proclaimed the Conqueror. There was then a mystery revealed, in that Dagon was brought low in his own place of refuge. The accomplishment came after the type, in that the wicked one was brought low wherein he trusted. . . . Fulfilled was the mystery. Blessed is He who by the true Lamb redeemed us, and destroyed our destroyer as He did Dagon." ¶

"And the woman saw that the tree was good to eat . . . and she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave to her husband who did eat."—iii. 6.

"O the marvel of Thy Conception from Mary! For as death entered and infused itself by the small winding aperture of the ear, so did life penetrate and pour itself into the new ear of Mary. And as a tree brought forth death, so did another tree bring back life, that whereas by the one death conquered, by the other life triumphed." **

"And Adam said: The woman . . . gave me of the tree, and I did eat. . . . And she answered: the serpent deceived me, and I did eat."—iii. 12, 13.

* S. Theodotus of Ancyra, *Orat. in Nativ. Domini.* § 1. In Synodo Ephesin. lecta. Concil. Tom. v. p. 185.

† *Orat.* i. *De Annunt.* Int. Opp. S. Greg. Thaumat.

‡ S. Proclus, *Orat.* vi. *de laudib. Deip.* § 1, p. 632, Galland. T. ix.

§ Tertullian, *Contr. Marcion.* L. ii. c. iv.

|| *Gen.* iii. 15, 1 *Kings* v. 4.

¶ S. Ephrem, *Rhythm* iii., *On the Nativity*, Morris, p. 20.

** *Serm. in loc.*, Opp. Syr. T. ii. p. 324.

"He did not dare to approach the man because of his strength, but addressed himself to the woman as the weaker, whilst she was still a virgin. . . ." "By the virgin Eve death ensued. By the Virgin, or rather from the Virgin, must come forth life: that as the serpent deceived the one, so Gabriel might bear the good tidings to the other." *

"And the Lord God said to the serpent . . . I will put enmities between thee and the woman and thy seed and her seed: she shall crush thy head, and thou shalt lie in wait for her heel."—iii. 14, 15.

The following observations are borrowed in brief from Fr. Harper:—

"Three Hebrew Codices have certainly the *feminine* here (as *ipsa* in the Vulgate); five others are dubious. Also one Chaldean Codex—and it is quoted in the same form by Maiemonides.

S. Ambrose has the received reading of the Vulgate:—†

". . . et semen mulieris: Ipsa tibi observabit caput, et tu illius calcaneum."

Prudentius from Spain, writes:—

"Auctor et ipse coluber
Plectitur improbus, ut Mulier
Colla trilinguia calce terat." ‡

And Claudius Marius Victor, a native of Marseilles, who wrote, about A.D. 426, a curious sort of commentary on the book of Genesis, in verse:—

". . . Pedibus repes et pectore prono,
Teque tuo Mulier perimet cum semine, cujus
Callidus extremis tantum insidiabere plantis,
Ut trepidans etiam capiti vestigia figat." §

S. Augustine uniformly quotes in the same way, without any hint as to the reading being new or doubtful. || He had a great predilection for the works of S. Cyprian, who adopts the *masculine* reading: yet, notwithstanding this, he never makes any explanation or apology, nor suggests any doubt, but uses what is now the received text as a matter of course.

* S. Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catech.* xii. nn. 5; 15.

† *De Fuga sæculi*, vii. 43. He died in 396.

‡ *Cathemerion*, iii. vv. 126-128. He died 405.

§ *Comment. in Genes.*, L. i. 1. Migne, Patr. Lat. T. 61, p. 948.

|| *De Genes. ad Manich.*, L. ii. *De Gen. ad lit.*, L. xi. In *Ps.* xlviii., *Serm.* i. n. 6. In *Ps.* ciii., *Serm.* iv. n. 6.

Hence the reading which we now have in the Vulgate must have existed in one of the old Italic recensions long before the time of S. Ambrose, and been thoroughly popularised before his days, to have been thus used by laymen in Spain and Gaul.

S. Cyprian after quoting *Isa.* vii. 10-14, with the reading in *v.* 13, *Non pusillum vobis certamen cum hominibus, quoniam Deus præstat agonem,* says :—

"God had foretold that from a woman would come forth this Seed, which should trample down the head of the devil, in Genesis." He then cites *Gen.* iii. 14, 15, with the reading: *Ipse tuum observabit caput, et tu observabis calcaneum ejus.* (*Testim. contr. Judæos,* L. ii. 9.)

S. Jerome adopts the *feminine* reading in his own works, yet the *masculine* appears in his translation,* at least in what is supposed to be the genuine transcript, as it has been published by Vallarsius and Maffei. He, moreover, adopts it in his book, *De Quæstionibus Hebraicis in Genesin,* where he is writing critically. And this by the way affords us another and independent proof of the antiquity and authority of the *feminine* reading. For, that such an enthusiast for the Hebrew text, as S. Jerome proved himself to be, should have retained a reading, which he rejected as a Biblical scholar, is inconceivable, except on the hypothesis that it was already so strongly stereotyped in the memory of the faithful as to deter him from attempting to innovate upon it in his exegetic works.

Whether the masculine or the feminine reading be preferred as the right one, it is certain, according to the Fathers, that by the words immediately preceding God has established an enmity between Mary and the devil. For these first words of the verse are unquestioned. Here there are no variations. Protestants equally with Catholics admit the words as they stand. It is *the* woman between whom and the devil God declares that He will put enmity; *that* woman—One, that is, who should be well known, easily recognised, in the new order of grace. And there can be no mistake as to who it is that is meant. For it is that woman whose Seed is to crush the serpent's head. It must be Mary, the Mother of Jesus, and she alone, to whom the words allude. And so the Fathers generally understand them. S. Irenæus, in the second century, although he gives the masculine reading to the second clause, not once only, but in several places

* See *Comment. in Isa.*, L. xvi., cap. lviii. 12.

explicitly interprets *the* woman, announced in the Protoevangel to mean Our Lady. Origen * follows S. Irenæus. So the Pseudo-Origen, † S. Epiphanius, ‡ Severianus, Bishop of Gabala, § and many others. ||

"The Lord said that Satan had fallen from heaven. That cursed one had exalted himself, but was cast down from his exaltation. The foot of Mary trod under her heel him who with his heel had wounded Eve. Blessed is He who by His birth laid him prostrate." ¶

"Blessed Babe that bruised the head of the serpent that smote her." **

Chrysippus of Jerusalem (455) represents Satan as thus complaining:—

"The first Eve of old raised me on high, but the second Eve has cast me down." ††

S. Theophilus of Antioch (second century) has:—

"I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed: it (αὐτό) shall watch thy head, and thou shalt watch his (or, its, αὐτοῦ) heel." ‡‡

S. Irenæus understood the woman to be the Blessed Virgin Mary.

"God therefore put enmity between the serpent and the woman, and her seed, who were watching one another—the one, the sole of whose foot should be bitten, and who was able to trample upon the head of the enemy; whilst the other was biting, and striking at, and impeding the steps of man, until the predestined Seed came to crush his head: and this was the offspring of Mary, whereof says the Prophet: *Thou shalt walk upon the asp and the basilisk, and thou shalt trample under foot the lion and the dragon.* §§ For which cause God . . . taking pity on man, turned back the enmity, whereby the apostate angel wished to make him an enemy of God, on himself the author of the enmities; taking away His own enmity which was against man, and turning it back, He cast it on the serpent." |||

* *In Jerem.*, Hom. xix. 7.

† Hom. i., *Decem in divers. Matt. et Joan. loc.*

‡ *Hær.* L. iii. 78, 18.

§ *De mundi Creat.* vi.

‖ See Harper's *Peace through the Truth*, 1st Series. *The Immaculate Conception*, pp. 339-347.

¶ S. Ephrem, *Hymn* ii. 31, *On the Birth of J. C. in the flesh*, Lamy, vol. ii., p. 455.

** *Rhythm* viii., Morris, p. 42.

†† *Orat. de laudib. Virg.*, Bibliothec. Gr. Lat. T. ii., p. 428.

‡‡ *Epist. ad Autolyc.*, L. ii. c. 21.

§§ *Ps.* xc. 13.

Hær., L. iii., cap. xxiii. 7. See also L. iv. c. xi. 3; L. v. c. xviii. 3; c. xix. 1; xxi. 1. S. Justin, M., *Tryph.* 100. Tertullian, *De Carne Christi*, cap. xvii.

So also Origen:—

"The serpent made of old a compact with Eve. She was friendly to him, and the serpent friendly to the woman. But God, being good, had care that this compact should be dissolved, and this evil friendship destroyed, and, as the good God, says: *I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed.* Let us then piously hear by what means God puts enmity between him and her, so as to bring about friendship between her and Christ. For it cannot be, that one should be at the same time a friend of those who are mutually opposed. And as no one can serve two masters, so no one can be a friend of God and of mammon, a friend of Christ and the serpent. But it must needs be that the friendship of Christ should generate enmities with the serpent, and the friendship of the serpent bring forth enmities with Christ." *

"All things here cannot, in truth, be entirely and perfectly applied to Eve, but have their real and full accomplishment in that most holy, unique, and peerless stem, which sprung from the Virgin Mary alone without human generation. For this her Son came down here below in order to extinguish the force and power of the serpent. For this cause the Only Son of God came forth from a woman, to overthrow the serpent." †

"The Mother of our Lord Jesus Christ was therefore then already promised in that woman: for she it was who was made the opponent of the serpent's enmities. God says, *I will put* enmities between thee and the woman. He says not, *I put*, lest it might seem to refer to Eve. The word is one of promise relating to the future. The woman spoken of was assuredly she who was to give birth to the Saviour, and not she who was to bear a fratricide. *I will put enmities between thee and the woman.* That is to say, I will raise up a woman who, setting aside credulity, will not only not listen to thee, though thou shouldst point to the sweetness of apples for opening her eyes, or promise her that she should be like to God, but one who, when even Gabriel shall deliver his message, will demand a reason for the strangeness of his promise. *How*, she will ask, *shall this be done, because I know not man?* ‡ For while a golden modesty at the sight of the Angel caused her to fear, yet the fervour of her faith, and her constancy, gave her unfaltering courage to inquire the reason. The angel charges her not with unbelief, as he did Zachary, but at once instructs her concerning the marvel of the Divine operation, saying, *The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee.*" §

"What is it that troubles thee in My nativity?"—Christ is represented as saying to a Manichæan—"I was not conceived by concupiscence. I Myself made the Mother, of whom I was to be born. I prepared and made clean the way for My journey. She whom thou despisest, O Manichæan, is My Mother; but she was formed by My hand. If I could have been defiled in making her, I could have been defiled in being born of her. Eve by her

* *In Jerem.*, Hom. xi. v. 7. See also *In Matt.* xiv. v. 19.

† S. Epiphanius, *Hær.* 58, 19. See also *Hær.* 78, 19, quoted above, *Mary the Second Eve.*

‡ *Luke* i. 34.

§ *Epist.* vi. 6, *Ad amicum ægrotum*, int. Opp. S. Hieron., Appendix. This Epistle is commonly ascribed to S. Maximus.

disobedience merited punishment, Mary by her obedience obtained grace. The one by tasting of what was forbidden was cursed, the other by believing the angel was blessed; the one brought us death, the other bore us life." *

"The mother of our race brought punishment on the world, the Mother of our Lord brought the world's salvation." †

"He is mistaken, dearly beloved, who thinks that this day of reparation can be compared with that other of creation. For in the beginning the earth was formed, to-day it is renewed. In the beginning, on account of Adam's sin, *the earth was cursed in his work*,‡ but to-day is restored to it peace and security." §

"God chose out Mary alone from the entire company of virgins to be the instrument of our salvation." ||

"Two women are celebrated for their innocence and simplicity, Mary and Eve: one was the source of salvation, the other of our death." ¶

"In fulminating the sentence on the serpent according to his desert, God dooms him to have earth for food, to crawl on his belly, and since it was he who made that death, He adds: *And I will put enmities between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and the woman's seed; she shall crush thy head, and thou shalt watch for her heel.* Seest thou not, what He then threatened the serpent in Christ. For I refuse utterly to allow any other seed of the woman, but that which the Apostle says was *made of a woman; made of flesh*, which says the Evangelist, *was supposed to be the son of Joseph*, but was not; and was in fact *the Word made flesh*." **

"I, the Maker of all creation," God is represented as saying by the angel Gabriel, "have espoused this Virgin for man's salvation. It is My will to renovate the human race in her virginal womb. It is My will, by Myself being fashioned, to make again the image which I formed, and by a new formation to repair the old. From virgin earth I formed the first man whom the devil seized upon, dragged and cast down as an enemy, and then mocked at My fallen image. It is now My will to form for Myself from virgin earth a new Adam, both that nature may have for herself a fitting defence, and with justice be crowned by Him who laid her low, and the enemy be brought to ignominy." Gabriel then thus salutes Mary: "*Hail, full of grace.* That primeval mother of thine, Eve, having transgressed the law, received as sentence that in sorrow she should bring forth children: but to thee belongs this Ave. She brought forth Cain, and thereby, her offspring envy and slaughter: but thou shalt give birth to a Son who will bring with Him life and incorruption." ††

"Christ is born of a woman, that as Adam was not able to take precautions

* *Tract. contr. quinque hæres.*, cap. v., Int. Opp. Augustini. Append., Tom. 8.

† Serm. 195. *De Annunt. II. Ib.*

‡ *Gen.* iii. 17.

§ S. Ephrem, *De divers., Serm. De laudib. Deip.*, Opp. Gr. et Lat. T. iii., p. 607. See the quotation continued *supra*, p. 50.

|| *Ib.* p. 607.

¶ *In Genes.*

** *John* i. 14. *De viro perfecto*, int. Opp. Hieron., cap. vi. Vallarsius says that it is undoubtedly the work of S. Maximus of Turin.

†† *Hom. in Deip. Annunt.*, Int. Opp. Chrysost.

against the devil's deception through Eve, so the devil might not discover the presence of God when He came by Mary. A woman therefore brought forth the world's salvation, that she who had shown herself the fosteress of iniquity might become the ministress of justice, and that she through whom death opened its way into this world might be for us the entrance to life." *

"He then who had been once reckoned amongst the first angels, but preferred to be changed into a devil, grudged man the possession of all these things [described as belonging to his original happy state], lest he should see man full of glory. And so kindled with this jealousy, he assails the woman with his guiles, and induced the virgin to taste of the forbidden apple: the virgin thus induced soon induces her virgin husband, and overthrows his estate of life, as she ministers to him the food of death, the aliment of sin; and thus becomes the occasion of his entire ruin, she who had been formed for his especial solace. Hence the first sin, hence the origin of death; hence toiling, hence sorrow, hence groans, hence was propagated the bitter condition of our slavery. Hence it is, brethren, hence it is that the order of Christ in His birth was as follows. The devil had come to a virgin, the angel came to Mary, that what the evil angel had overthrown, the good angel might raise up. The one persuaded perfidy, the other faith; one believed the tempter, whilst the other believed her Maker. Christ is born, that by His birth He may make corrupted nature whole again: He bears man (in His own person) that man may now no longer fall: him whom He had made earthly, He has made to be heavenly: him, who was animated with a human spirit, He quickens into a Divine spirit; and thus causes him to rise whole to God, so that whatever there is in him, of sin, of death, of labour, of sorrow, and of earth—of all this He leaves nothing." †

"The devil by speaking through the serpent to Eve, through the ears of Eve brought death into the world. God, by the Angel, made known His word to Mary, and upon all ages shed forth life: the Angel cast the word, and the Virgin conceived Christ. . . . Mary was made the restoration of women, for through her are they shown to be withdrawn from the ruin of the primeval malediction. For, in fact, the three evils of Eve are clearly done away with by the three goods of Mary. Since to Eve was it said: *In sorrows and in sadness shalt thou bring forth, and thy desire shall be to thy husband* (*et ad virum conversio tua*), *and he shall have the rule over thee.* To these three evils, therefore, women who do not follow Mary subject themselves, to sorrow, sadness, and servitude. But with what most glorious three goods Mary is exalted, listen: the angelic salutation, the divine benediction, and the fulness of grace. For we read that the Angel saluted her: *Hail, Mary, full of grace, blessed art thou amongst women.* In saying *Hail*, he offered to her heavenly salutation: in saying *Full of grace*, he implied that the wrath of the primeval sentence was now completely (*ex integro*) taken away, and the full grace of benediction restored: in saying *Blessed art thou amongst women*, he showed forth the blessed fruit of her virginity. *Blessed art thou amongst women;* for cursed had been Eve, who now we believe, through Mary has returned to the glory of benediction. . . . But why was it that our God thus willed to form us anew to life by being born

* S. Maximus, *Hom. Hiem.* xv., *De Nat. Dom.* x.

† S. Peter Chrysologus, Serm. 148, *De Incarnationis Sacramento.*

of a Virgin? It was, that, since through a woman death entered into the world, salvation might be restored through a Virgin." *

"Since God had said to Eve, *in sorrow shalt thou bring forth children*, therefore, to the Virgin the Angel announces joy, whereby the sorrow decreed of old may be loosed, saying, *Hail, full of grace.*" †

"On account of her sin the woman was sentenced to sadness, sorrow, and subjection, until in His goodness Christ born of a woman, took away the curse. And since one under guilt (ὑπαιτία οὖσα) could not bring forth the Innocent (τὸν ἀνεύθυνον), the angel hastened at once to do away with sorrow by joy, thus favourably beginning his speech by the *Ave;* and straightway suggested the cause of joy: *the Lord is with thee.* For Mary was, in fact, the image of Eve, since each of them was a virgin; but Eve, whilst yet in virginity sinned, and therefore from the serpent derived sadness and sorrows, which she thenceforth transmitted to all women as sinners. But Mary received joy from God, and chased away the curse from our race; and her childbirth that knew no sorrow, put an end to that which takes place in sadness and grief." ‡

"Mary so far excelled all others that she received of His own will God, the Word Himself, whom she compassed without any straitness of space. And to her at once the Archangel Gabriel first cried out: *Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with thee.* Gabriel's happy tidings were soon to her the beginning of joy. For whereas the first virgin was hemmed in with troubles inflicted by the sentence of condemnation on account of her transgression, so that from her come so many groans, and by reason of her every woman has her lot in sorrow, and on her account every childbirth suffers bitterness; the Second Virgin, through the angelic salutation has banished all the misery of the female sex, and has closed up the entire source of sadness that is wont to be present in giving birth, and has dissipated the cloud of despondence with which women are oppressed in childbirth, and caused the light of gladness to shine in families." §

"Through Mary all women are blessed. For no longer is the female sex cursed and under execration; since it has achieved whereby it can surpass in glory even the angels. Now Eve is cured, the Egyptian woman (Agar) reduced to silence, Dalila entombed, Jezabel whelmed in everlasting oblivion, Herodias, too, is lost to memory; and now the roll of women is held in

* Serm. 123, *In Nat. Dom.* vii. nn. 1, 2, 3, Int. Opp. S. Augustin.

† *Comment. in Luc.* i. 28, Int. Opp. Tit. Bostrens.

‡ Procopius Gazæus, *Comm. in Gen.* iii., Ap. Mai., Class. auct., T. vi., pp. 193-4.

§ Hesychius, *Orat. de Virg. laudib.* "On the words of S. Paul, 1 *Tim.* ii. 15. *Yet she shall be saved through child-bearing,* Theophylact says, that some understand *through child-bearing* (διὰ τῆς τεκνογονίας) to mean the child-bearing of the Blessed Virgin Mary, which effected women's salvation: for she gave birth to Christ, and in Him to many Christian sons and daughters." Cornel. a Lap., *in loc.*

It is doubtless, with allusion to the regeneration of infants by the grace of baptism, for which the Blessed Virgin has thus so greatly co-operated, that S. Cyril of Alexandria says: "Hail, Mary, Mother of God, through whom John and the Jordan are sanctified, and the devil is cast out, Hail, Mary, Mother of God, through whom every faithful soul is saved." *Encom. in Deip.*, Opp. T. v. P. ii. p. 381.

admiration. . . . For which cause let us say to Mary, *Blessed art thou amongst women*, thou who alone hast brought remedy for Eve's sorrow, alone hast wiped away the mourner's tears, alone hast borne the price of the world's redemption." *

"For this cause did the Virgin Mary undertake all those functions of nature (conceiving, bringing forth, giving milk), with regard to Our Lord Jesus Christ, that she might succour all women who fly to her protection; and thus restore the whole race of women as the New Eve, even as the New Adam, the Lord Jesus Christ, repaired the whole race of men." †

"Make thee an ark of timber planks," etc.—vi. 14-22.

"Noe framed his ark of incorruptible woods, but Christ, the spiritual Noe, made for Himself the ark of His body from the incorrupt Mary." ‡

"O Mary, sacred ark, whereby we are saved from the deluge of sin." §

"Mary is an ark broader, longer, more celebrated than that of Noe. The one was an ark for animals, the other an ark of life; the one for perishing animals, but the other of incorruptible life; the one bore Noe, but the other Noe's Maker; the one had two and three stories, and floors and chambers, but the other the whole fulness of the Trinity; since the Holy Ghost both came upon her and was her guest, whilst the Father overshadowed her, and the Son, carried in her womb, dwelt therein. *For the Holy Ghost*, it is said, *shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee; and therefore the Holy that shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.*

"Seest thou how great and of what kind is the dignity of the Virgin Mother of God? For the Only-begotten Son of God the world's Creator was born as an infant of her, re-formed Adam, sanctified Eve, drove out the dragon, and opened Paradise, keeping sure the seal of her womb." ||

"An ark truly royal, an ark most precious is the ever-Virgin Mother of God, an ark which received the treasure of entire sanctification. Not that ark wherein were all kinds of animals, as in the ark of Noe, which escaped the shipwreck of the whole drowning world. Not that ark in which were the tables of stone, as in the ark that journeyed in company with Israel throughout the desert; but an ark whose architect and inhabitant, pilot and merchant, companion of the way, and leader, was the Creator of all creatures, all which He bears in Himself, but by all is not contained." ¶

xviii. 10-12; xxi. 7.

S. Ephrem in his sermon, *In Abraham et Isaac*, draws out the analogy between the conception of Sara, and the Annunciation to the Blessed Virgin Mary, etc., dwelling on the former only for the sake of the latter. **

* S. Proclus, *Orat.* v. *de Virginis laud.*, §§ iii. ap. Galland., T. ix., p. 631.
† *Serm.* 15, al. 123, *de temp. In Nat. Dom.* vii. 3. Int. Opp. S. August.
‡ S. Proclus, *Orat.* vii. *in S. Theophania.*
§ S. Ephrem, *Prec.* iv. Opp. Græc. T. iii. p. 529.
|| Hesychius, *Orat. de laudib. Deip.*
¶ Chrysippus, *Orat. de laudib. Deip.*
** Opp. Græc. iii. p. 376. See Morris, p. 19.

And S. Ambrose :—

"Receive me in that flesh which is fallen in Adam. Receive me not from Sara but from Mary; inasmuch as she is a Virgin incorrupt, a Virgin by grace free from all stain of sin. Suscipe me in carne quæ in Adam lapsa est, * Suscipe me non ex Sara sed ex Maria; ut incorrupta sit Virgo, sed Virgo per gratiam ab omni integra labe peccati." †

"God give thee the dew of heaven, and of the fatness of the earth," etc.—xxvii. 28.

"She it is whom Isaac foresaw, when he said to Jacob: The Lord give thee the blessing of heaven from above, and the blessing of the earth containing all things. For He who came down from heaven, God Only-begotten, the Word, was carried in the womb, and born from the virginal paradise that has all things." ‡

"Juda is a lion's whelp: to the prey, my son, thou art gone up."—xlix. 9.

Many of the Fathers here read: "Ex germine, fili mi, ascendisti." And in applying the passage to our Lord, they interpret the *germen* of the Blessed Virgin, and compare it with the *virga*, *Is.* xi. 1. Thus S. Hippolytus, § and S. Ambrose who says :—

"Marvellously did Jacob set forth His Incarnation by saying: *From a shoot, my Son, thou art gone up:* for that, as though the brother of earth, He germinated in the womb of the Virgin, and as a flower of good odour for the redemption of the whole world, issuing from His Mother's bowels with splendour of new light, He rose up, as saith Isaias: *There shall go forth a rod from the root of Jesse and a flower shall rise up out of his root.* The root is the family of the Jews; the rod, Mary; Mary's flower, Christ. Rightly a rod, since she is of royal race, of the house and fatherland of David, and her flower, Christ, who did away with the stench of all the world's filth, and infused the sweet fragrance of eternal life." ||

"It is fitting, yea at all times, to proclaim as blessed, hold in admiration and to extol with praises the ever-blooming rod of Jesse, that brought life forth fruit to the entire race of men." ¶

"Jacob, directing his words to Him (*i.e.* to Jesus Christ), says, *From a shoot my Son didst Thou spring up* (ἐκ βλαστοῦ, υἱέ μου, ἀνέβης, as is the

* The Paris edition has: "*Non* in carne, quæ in Adam lapsa est": but all other editions and all the MSS. reject the negation, and with good reason; since here is signified nought else than that the flesh of Christ was of the same nature as that of Adam from which it was derived by generation, although no way stained with his sin.

† S. Ambrose, *In Ps.* cxviii., Serm. 22, 30; P. L. Tom. 15, p. 1599.

‡ S. Dionysius of Alexandria, *Respons. ad Quest.* x. *Pauli Samos.* The authenticity of this work is disputed.

§ See *infra*, in *Is.* xi. 1.

|| S. Ambrose, *In Luc.* Lib. ii. n. 24.

¶ Chrysippus, *Orat. de Virginis Laudib.*

reading in the lxx.) indicating that the shoot is Mary, and declaring Mary's unsullied purity." *

"Blessings of the breasts and of the womb."—xlix. 25.

"By this is meant that the true blessing from heaven is the Spirit descending through the Word upon flesh. And by *the breasts and the womb*, he means the blessings of the Virgin." †

EXODUS.

"And the Lord appeared to Moses in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush: and he saw that the bush was on fire and was not burnt."—iii. 2.

"In the fire Moses saw thy beauty in shadow, O daughter of David, in whose bosom dwelt the Flame, and thou wert not consumed, O Mother of God, and full of grace." ‡

"O burning bush unconsumed, open meadow, § and blossoming rod of Aaron! ‖ For thou, truly, wert the rod, and thy Son the flower; since from the root of David and Solomon blossomed forth Christ, our Creator, the Almighty God and Lord, the alone Most High. Of Him who is God and Man, art thou Mother, Virgin before birth, Virgin in birth, and Virgin after birth." ¶

"Dost thou not in the burning bush recognise Mary?" **

"And Beseleel made also the ark of setim-wood . . . and he overlaid it with the purest gold within and without."—xxxvi., xxv. 10, 11.

"And Bezaleel made an ark of undecaying wood, a type of the Body of Immanuel, which is incorruptible and not soiled by sin. By the gold within and without he indicates the Divine Nature of the Word, which was united unto all the functions (Syr. vessels) of the soul and the body in a manner no discourse can reach, seeing He anointed our manhood with His Godhead." ††

"The Ark would be the type and image of Christ: for if we look back to the way of the Incarnation of the Only-begotten, we shall see that it is in the temple of the Virgin, as in an ark that the Word of God took up His abode. *For in Him dwelt all the fulness of the Godhead bodily*, ‡‡ as the Scripture saith. But the testimonies in the ark were the word of God, and the wood of it was imperishable, and with pure and choicest gold was it beautified

* S. Chrysostom, Hom. *In illud, Pater si possibile est*, etc., Opp., Tom. iii. p. 21.

† S. Hippolytus, Ante-Nicene Christian Library, vol. vi. p. 420.

‡ S. Ephrem, Opp. Syr., T. iii., p. 605.

§ *Prov.* xxvii. 25, *Ecclus.* xxiv. 42.

‖ *Numb.* xviii. 7-10, *Heb.* ix. 4, *Is.* xi. 1.

¶ *De laudib. B. V. M.*, Opp. Gr., Tom. iii., p. 575.

** S. Theodotus of Ancyra, *Hom. in Salvat. Natal.*

†† S. Ephrem, *In loc.*, Morris, p. 35.

‡‡ *Col.* ii. 9.

within and without. For the Body of Christ is incorruptible, being by the power and brightness of the indwelling Word, and the nature and life-giving operation of the Holy Ghost, maintained in incorruption." *

"At that time, the Saviour coming from the Virgin, the Ark, brought forth His own Body into the world from that Ark, which was gilded with pure gold within by the Word, and without by the Holy Ghost; so that the truth was shown forth, and the Ark was manifested. . . . And the Saviour came into the world bearing the incorruptible Ark, that is to say His own body." †

2 KINGS.

"And David danced with all his might before the Lord."—vi. 14.

"The prophet David danced before the Ark. Now what else should we say the Ark was but holy Mary? The Ark bore within it the tables of the Testament, but Mary bore the Heir of the same Testament itself. The former contained in it the Law, the latter the Gospel. The one had the voice of God, the other His Word. The Ark, indeed, was radiant within and without with the glitter of gold, but holy Mary shone within and without with the splendour of virginity. The one was adorned with earthly gold, the other with heavenly." ‡

PSALMS.

"Purged from the earth" (*probatum terræ*).—xi. 7.

"That is: the Church. Those Divine words are purged by the Holy Spirit, whom the Church received. In another sense: *purged from the earth*, that is, Christ the Lord, who came in that humanity, in regard to flesh, which He received from Mary—as though signifying that the Lord received earth." §

"He bowed the heavens, and came down."—xvii. 10.

"This is what he says in another Psalm, || *He came down like the rain on the fleece:* because He presented Himself to us humble, concealed and hiding under the form of a servant. Or in another sense: the heavens, the angels were bowed down, when Gabriel came to Mary, and Christ descended and came in flesh." ¶

* S. Cyril, *De Ador. in Spir. et Verit*, p. 293. S. Maximus of Turin and other Fathers apply the Ark of the Covenant to the Blessed Virgin Mary.

† S. Hippolytus, *In Dan.* vi., Patr. Gr., Tom. 10, p. 648.

‡ *Serm.* xlii. 6, Int. Opp., S. Ambrosii.

§ *Breviarium in Psalterium*, in loc., Int. Opp., S. Hieron. This work, though not S. Jerome's, holds a place amongst the learned critics, much higher than that of all others wrongly attributed to the Saint, as giving many passages from his commentaries which are now lost, as well as from Origen, Hilary, and other ancient commentators.

|| See *infra, Ps.* lxxi. 6. ¶ *Ib.*

"His tabernacle round about Him."—*v.* 12.

"Christ in Mary as though the Bridegroom in the bridechamber, and the body of Mary as though the tabernacle." *

"He hath set His tabernacle in the sun: and He as a bridegroom coming out of His bridechamber."—xviii. 6.

"*In the sun*, in the womb of the holy Virgin Mary. Mary is interpreted the Star of the sea. The light of the sun shines more brightly than that of the stars. The Sun of Justice is the Lord; as saith the prophet: *The Sun of Justice shall arise upon you* (*Mal.* iv.): that is, Christ. This sun illumined the star, namely, Mary, that she might be as a sun. Thus He set His tabernacle in the sun, when He assumed a body from her womb. The Bridegroom is the Word of the Father; the Spouse, human nature, wherewith He came forth from the bridechamber, that is, from the womb of the Virgin." †

"But I am a worm and no man."—xxi. 7.

"Why did the Lord of all creation will to be compared to a little worm? In the first place we may put this down to humility, which is the greatest virtue of the saints. Hence holy Moses confesses that he is before God as an animal without reason, and David more than once calls himself a flea.‡ Here, however, I think it should be taken rather in the sense that the worm is not produced by generation, but from pure earth alone; and for this reason the Lord is compared thereto; since the Saviour was Himself engendered from the pure Mary alone. I have read, moreover, in the Books of Moses, that worms were bred from the manna.§ A most worthy and meet comparison is the little worm engendered from manna, and Christ the Lord generated from the Virgin. Or I should rather say that Mary is herself the manna, because she is delicate, shining, sweet, and virgin; and coming as though from heaven, she has flowed down to all the peoples of the Churches in food sweeter than honey, which whoso neglects to eat and feed on cannot have life in himself, as the Lord declares: *Except you eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His blood, you shall not have life in you.*" ||

"Christ is called both a worm and a man. A worm, according to what the Prophet says: *Fear not, thou worm of Jacob.*¶ And a man, because born of Mary. His birth is like to that of a worm; because a worm that is born in wood has no father, but a mother only; and Christ was born of Mary without any earthly father." **

"From the womb of My Mother Thou art My God."—*v.* 10.

"The Son of God Himself says this, speaking to the Father. Since, then, from His Mother's womb the Father is His God, the Father is the greater. The Son says again: *O Lord I am Thy servant, and the Son of Thy handmaid,*††

* *Ib.* † *Ib.*
‡ *Ps.* lxxii. 23. 1 *Kings* xxiv. 15; xxvi. 20. § *Exod.* xvi. 20.
|| *John* vi. 54. S. Maximus Taur., *Hom.* 45. Patr. Lat. Tom. 57, p. 330.
¶ *Is.* xli. 14.
** *Breviarium in Psalterium*, in loc. Int. Opp. S. Hieron.
†† *Ps.* cxv. 6.

that is, of Mary. He is Himself a servant, and consequently the Father is greater." *

"For with Thee is the fountain of life."—xxxv. 10.

"With Mary is a fountain of life, and the breasts of the rational milk without guile." †

"The queen stood on Thy right hand, in gilded clothing surrounded with variety. Hearken, O daughter, and see, and incline thy ear: and forget thy people and thy father's house. And the King shall greatly desire thy beauty: for He is the Lord thy God, and Him they shall adore."—xliv. 10-12.

"David was by no means ignorant that Christ Himself would come, nay, he makes mention hereof in the 44th Psalm.‡ And lest any one should think that He came only phantastically, he signifies that He will be very man, and that He is He by whom all things were made, by saying in the 86th Psalm: § *Mother Sion shall say, a man even a man is born in her, and the Most High Himself hath founded her*, which is the same as though he said: *And the Word was God, all things were made by Him, and the Word was made flesh.* Wherefore, since he knew that He was to be born of the Virgin, he no way kept it silent, but forthwith gave indication thereof in the 44th Psalm: *Hearken, O daughter, and see, and incline thy ear: and forget thy people and thy father's house. And the King shall greatly desire thy beauty.* For this is like what Gabriel said: *Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with thee.* For when he spoke of Him as Christ, he at once made known His human generation that was from the Virgin by the words, *Hearken, O daughter.* And you see Gabriel calls her by her name, *Mary*, because he was of a different nature from her, whilst David with reason calls her *daughter*, since she was to spring from his own seed." ¶

"The self-same who was born of the Virgin is, in truth, King, and the Lord God. And on His account, she who gave Him birth is properly and truly proclaimed Queen, Lady, and Mother of God. And hence it befits us, as we contemplate her and the Incarnate Son born of her, to say: *The queen stood on Thy right hand, in gilded clothing; surrounded with variety.* For, woman though she is, she is Queen and Lady, and Mother of God; and standing now as Queen at the right hand of her Son the King of all, she is celebrated in Sacred Writ as clad around with the gilded clothing of incorruption and immortality, and surrounded with variety. Not indeed merely in her spiritual simplicity, and as though without flesh and body does she stand, but clad around as to her most holy flesh with incorruption and immortality; and surrounded with variety as to her most holy bones, which support her flesh. For it was from her flesh and bones, as though from Adam of yore, that the New Adam formed His Incarnation as a rib for Himself, which He

* Cerealis Castellensis, *Libellus contra Maximin. Arianum*, cap. vi. P. L. Tom. 58, p. 760.

† 1 *Pet.* ii. 2. S. Theodotus of Ancyra, *Orat. in Deip. et in Simeon.*, § iv. Galland. T. ix., p. 461.

‡ *vv.* 7, 8. § *v.* 5. || *John* i. 1, 3, 14.

¶ S. Athanasius, *Epist. ad Marcellin. in Interpret. Psalm.* § 1.

bears for ever. Hence too it is that the new Eve, called Mother of life, remains clad around and girt about with variety for the first-fruits of life immortal to all the living. Let us say then again and again, always and for ever, as we cast our regards both to the person of the King, our Lord and God, and also to the person of the Queen, Our Lady, and Mother of God, from a certain influence of spiritual contemplation, and, so to say, clear actual vision: *The Queen stood at Thy right hand, in gilded clothing, clad about, surrounded with variety.*

"And now hearken, O daughter, to David and Abraham; and incline thy ear to our supplication; forget not thy people, nor us who are of the house of thy Father. For verily we are thy fathers by propagation, and thou art our daughter by generation from us: and it becomes thee, as being Mother of God, Queen, Lady and Mistress, for the sake of the King, Lord, God, and Master, born of thee to be mindful of us, as thou standest by Him, who to us terrible, to thee is pleasant, and grants thee all graces—whence thou art called full of grace, as though full of all joy on account of the coming of the Holy Ghost upon thee. Wherefore *all the rich among the people we entreat thy countenance*,* enriched with such good things and spiritual contemplations, we cry to thee: Be mindful of us, most holy Virgin, who after childbirth didst remain virgin; and grant to us for these small words great gifts from the riches of thy graces, O thou full of grace. Accept them as though they were true and adequate praises in thy honour; and if there is in them any virtue and any praise, we offer them as a hymn from ourselves and from all creatures to thee, full of grace, Lady, Queen, Mistress, Mother of God, and Ark of sanctification."†

"Let us consider, so far as we may be able, the sense that lies hidden in these words of David: *Hearken, O daughter.* That is [the royal prophet is represented as saying] for the rest my discourse is directed to thee, who didst take thy origin from me. My discourse is, I say, to thee, through whom I send the same glad tidings to the Church of the Gentiles also. My discourse is to thee, who art to be espoused to the great King. My discourse is to thee, who art to conceive God the Word, as He Himself knows. *Hearken, O daughter, and see:* listen so diligently, that thou mayest even behold the effect with the very eyes of thy mind. Hearken both to me as I foretell these things with kindly affection, and to Gabriel who will make known the same to thee. *Hearken, O daughter, and see, and incline thy ear*, since this is the propitious news of the world's redemption. *Incline thy ear*, and let thy hearing direct thy heart. *And forget thy people and thy father's house:* for the people whence thou hast contracted kindred, is evil, and brings thee shame: a people without wisdom is closely joined to thee who art by nature [or, origin] an immaculate shoot; and it is a fruitful culture of thorns that brings forth thy rose. But forget together with thy people also the very house of thy father. Hear the dignity which after brief space thou wilt acquire from this ineffable Conception. For prophet and king am I who will supply seed to thee: whilst thou shalt be shown forth to be the Mother of the King, who is Lord, not of earthly but of heavenly sceptres. *And forget thy people and thy father's house:* lest afterwards thou pay attention to this lower kindred: for thou shalt be changed

* *v.* 13.

† *Orat. in Deip. Annuntiat, nn.* 13, 14. Int. Opp. S. Athanasii.

into a queen. And hearken, he says, with what great love He who is the Maker and Lord of all will treat thee. *For*, says he, *the King shall greatly desire thy beauty.* The Father will Himself espouse thee for His own, the Holy Ghost will co-operate to those things which pertain to thy espousals, and the Son will assume the very beauty of thy temple. Deem not therefore that thou wilt bring forth a human infant, *For He is the Lord thy God, and thou shalt adore Him*, Himself thy Maker, and Himself thy Babe—Him thou shalt conceive, and with all others adore as Lord.

"Remark what an epithalamium David offered to the Mother of God, when as singer he chants his hymn, wherein too as father he congratulates the blessedness of so great a maid." *

"All the glory of the King's daughter is from within."—xliv. 14.

S. Jerome enjoined on the Roman matron Læta to bring up her daughter to imitate Mary in love of solitude and modesty, "for," he says, "of her was it written, *All the glory of the King's daughter is from within.*" He would have her commune in retirement, after the example of Mary, to whom at the same time he applies several passages of the Sacred Canticles. He tells Læta "at length to give this most precious gem to Mary's cell, and place her in the manger of the little wailing Jesus"—in other words, to send the child to Bethlehem, that she may be brought up in the monastery there with her grandmother Paula and her aunt Eustochium.†

"The Most High hath sanctified His own tabernacle."—xlv. 5.

"As Christ our priest was not chosen by hand of man, so neither was His tabernacle framed by men, but was established by the Holy Ghost; and by the power of God is that tabernacle protected, to be had in everlasting remembrance, Mary, God's Virgin Mother." ‡

"Not in a servant did He dwell, but in His holy tabernacle not made with hands, which is Mary the Mother of God." §

> "A not unfrequent word is that which says,
> That from the Virgin's bosom sprung God-Man,
> Whom erst the great God's Spirit unified;
> And temple holy for a Temple built:
> For Mary is Christ's temple, Christ the Word's." ||

* Chrysippus et Hesychius. *Orat. de Virginis laudibus.* Biblioth. Gr. Lat. Tom. ii., pp. 426, 427.

† S. Jerome, *Epist.* cvii. 7-13. P. L. Tom. 22, pp. 874-7.

‡ S. Dionysius of Alexandria, *Respons. ad Quæst.* v. Pauli Samos.

§ *Ib. ad Quæst.* vii. In calling Mary σκηνή ἠάχειροποίητος, the Saint implies that she was of an election and origin altogether singular and exceptional. The word occurs three times in the New Testament (*Mark* xiv. 58, 2 *Cor.* v. 1, *Col.* ii. 11), and in each case denotes what is of singular and divine origin. See also *Heb.* ix. 11, 24.

|| S. Gregory Nazianzen, *Carm.* viii., *Ad Nemesium*, *vv.* 180-4.

Venantius Fortunatus thus addresses S. Martin :—

"Thou seest Mary clad in glory's light,
The Lord's own temple, crowned with diadem,
The Bridegroom's nuptial couch, surpassing fair." *

"God is in the midst thereof it shall not be moved."—*v.* 6.

"This is spoken of Mary who was made firm, according to what was said: *Fear not, Mary.* Or it is said of the Church in tribulation: *God will help her in the morning early by holy inspection which the clean heart will merit. For blessed are the clean of heart, because they shall see God.*" †

"Happy root of Jesse, and most blessed house of David, wherein thou O Mother Virgin, and Virgin Mother didst bud forth. *God is in the midst of thee, and thou shalt not be moved; for the Most High hath sanctified His own tabernacle.* For in thee God's covenants and oaths have received their most glorious accomplishment: because through thee the Lord is made the God of hosts with us." ‡

"They were troubled, they were moved: trembling took hold of them. There were pains as of a woman in labour."—xlvii. 6, 7.

"There are pains there bitter and grievous; I mean, in the Church, that *city of the great King* (*v.* 3)—great pains as of a woman in labour until Christ be formed in us. And hence Paul was not without pain, when he saw in the foolish Galatians too tardy fruits of his teaching. Wherefore he said: *My little children of whom I am in labour again until Christ be formed in you.*§ The Lord also testifies in the Gospel that grievous are the pains of one in labour, when He says: *A woman, when she is in labour, hath sorrow, because her hour is come; but when she hath brought forth the child she remembereth no more the anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world.* || Great then is the labour for any one to acquire Christ for himself, so as not to be like a ship driven about hither and thither in the sea of this world without a pilot. Christ is joy. He too is the child of whom he is in labour, who has received in the womb of his mind the spirit of salvation. Whoso has brought forth and nourished, exults. Whoso is in labour, is in trembling and pain. It is well for thee both to bring forth and nourish Him. . . . For in such wise was Christ born of Mary, that thou mightest know Him, even as *the ox knoweth his owner,* ¶ that He it is who created thee . . . that He is to be adored as true and perfect God, of true and perfect God. . . . Hence Mary was not in labour of Him, but brought Him forth (non partuvivit sed peperit): for she knew that He who is both Lord and Saviour should be born of her, as she herself testifies, saying: *My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour.*" **

* *De Vita S. Martini.* † *Brev. in Psalt.* in loc. Int. Opp. S. Hieron.
‡ S. Methodius, *De Simeone et Anna*, § 9. Galland. Tom. iii., p. 813.
§ *Gal.* iv. 19. || *John* xvi. 21.
¶ *Is.* i. 3. ** S. Ambrose, *In Ps.* xlvii. *Enarrat.* n. 10, 11.

"God shall come manifestly; our God, and shall not keep silence."—xlix. 3.

"See you how He proceeds gradually to open His Word, and reveal the treasure, and emit a more cheerful ray, saying, *God shall come manifestly!* Why, when was He not present manifestly? At His former advent. For He came without noise, hidden from the many, and for a long time escaping observation. Why do I speak of the many? Whereas, not even the Virgin who conceived Him knew the ineffable Mystery, nor even His brethren believed in Him, nor he who appeared to be His father formed any great opinion of Him." *

"As a fruitful olive-tree in the house of God."—li. 10. †

"Mary was the fruitful olive-tree in the house of the Lord, from which the Holy Ghost took the branch of the Lord's body, brought it to the tempest-tossed race of man, and auspiciously announced peace from heaven." ‡

"God hath spoken in His Holy One."—lix. 8.

"The Father in the God Man, of whom Gabriel said to Mary: *The Holy which shall be born of thee, shall be called the Son of God.*" §

"Holy is Thy temple."—lxiv. 5.

"That Man in whom dwelleth the fulness of the Godhead: of whom was said to Mary: *The Holy which shall be born of thee, shall be called the Son of God*, when the Lord about to assume flesh was to take up His abode in her."

"The earth hath yielded her fruit."—lxvi. 7.

"The earth is holy Mary, of our earth, of our seed, of this clay, of this mould of Adam. *Earth thou art, and to earth shalt thou go.* This earth hath yielded her fruit. What she lost in paradise, she hath found in her Son. First she yielded the flower. He saith too in the Canticle of Canticles: *I am the flower of the field and the lily of the valleys.* That flower then has become fruit, that we may eat of it, that we may feed upon His flesh. Would you know Who is this fruit? A Virgin from a Virgin: the Lord from a handmaid: God from man: a son from a mother: fruit from earth." ¶

"*The earth hath yielded her blessings:* surely it is that virgin, not as yet watered by rains, nor fertilised by showers, from which man was first formed of old. Whence now Christ has been born of the Virgin according to the flesh." **

"What is this earth that has yielded the fruit of benediction but Mary? For to her was said: *Blessed art thou amongst women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb;* and in Genesis: Blessings of the *breasts and of the womb;* and in the Psalms: *Children the reward, the fruit of the womb;* and: *Of the fruit of thy*

* S. Augustine, *in Ps.* xlix. vol. v. p. 225.
† *Gen.* viii. 10, 11. *Eccli.* xxiv. 19.
‡ S. Proclus, *De Virg. Laud.* Orat. vi. 17. Ap. Galland. T. ix. p. 647.
§ *Brev. in Psalt.* in loc. Int. Opp. S. Hieron.
‖ *Ibid.*
¶ *Ibid.*
** Tertullian, *Contr. Judæos*, cap. 13.

womb I will set upon thy throne. Of which same fruit the holy Psalmist says in another Psalm: *Truth is sprung up out of the earth . . . and our earth shall yield her fruit;* and the Prophet also: *Drop down dew, ye heavens from above, and let the clouds rain the Just, let the earth be opened, and bud forth a Saviour.*"*

"He shall come down like rain upon the fleece, and as showers falling gently upon the earth."—lxxi. 6.

"One shadowed out His coming in a shower that cometh down tranquilly: and Mary again he shadowed forth in a fleece comely and pure." †

"The fleece of Gideon, in that it was a receptacle for the dew of heaven, has prefigured the Virgin, in whom the Word was made Flesh."‡

"That the Saviour was thus silently and secretly to descend into the Virgin, the prophet David had before testified, saying, *He shall descend like rain upon the fleece of wool.* For what takes place so silently and noiselessly as when rain pours upon a fleece of wool? . . . Well then may we compare Mary to the fleece, since in such wise did she conceive the Lord, as to drink Him in with her whole body, without suffering any rent of the same body, but was soft and tender for obedience, solid for sanctity. Rightly, I say, is Mary compared to a fleece, because from her Fruit garments of salvation are woven for the peoples. Clearly is Mary the fleece, since it was from her tender bosom the Lamb came forth, who Himself too weaving His Mother's wool, that is to say, her flesh, covers with a soft fleece the wounds of all the peoples. For every wound of sin is suffused with the wool of Christ, and for its healing is clothed with the garment of Christ." §

"For like as the rain came down upon the fleece of Gedeon, whilst the arid earth lacked it, so too did He glide down into the virginal womb by the infusion of the Holy Ghost." ||

"*Hail full of grace,* and well does he say *full;* for to others it is bestowed in parts, but on Mary was poured the whole fulness of grace. Of this it is in truth that David sings: *He shall come down like rain upon the fleece.* Now the fleece, though it is from the body, knows not the passion of the body. So too virginity, though it is in flesh, knows not the vices of flesh. A rain entirely heavenly shed itself with tranquil fall on the virginal fleece, and the whole shower of divinity poured upon her flesh, when the Word was made Flesh: and afterwards, under the pressure of the gibbet of the Cross, shed forth the rain of salvation on all lands, and let fall the droppings of grace into the souls of men." ¶

"Blessed be the Lord the God of Israel, who alone doth wonderful things. And blessed is the name of His majesty for

* *Luke* i. 42. *Gen.* xlix. 25. *Ps.* cxxvi. 3; cxxxi. 11; lxxxiv. 12, 13. *Is.* xlv. 8. Vigilius Tapsensis, *Contr. Eutychet.* L. iii. c. 8. Patr. Lat. Tom. 62.

† S. Ephrem, *A Rhythm against the Jews,* n. 11. Morris, p. 68. The Fleece is commonly thus explained, see Laurentius Sylv. *Allus.*, n. v.

‡ *On Judges. Ibid.*

§ *Serm.* v. Int. Op. S. Ambrosii. The Benedictine editors say that without controversy the words here quoted are taken from S. Ambrose's commentary on *Ps.* lxxi, which is used wrongly to be attributed to Ruffinus.

|| *Brev. in Psalt.* in loc. Int. Opp. S. Hieron.

¶ *Serm. de Assump.* c. 5. Int. Opp. S. Hieron. Tom. xi. p. 132.

ever: and the whole earth shall be filled with His majesty. So be it. So be it."—lxxi. 18, 19.

"Blessed art thou in the generations of women, thou of God most blessed: for through thee it is the earth has been filled with that divine glory of God, as is sung in the Psalms: *Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, and the whole earth shall be filled with His majesty. So be it. So be it.* And says the Prophet: *The lintels of the doors were raised up at the voice wherewith they cried;* whereby is signified the veil of the Temple casting its shade before the Ark of the covenant, which prefigured thee." *

"He hath wrought salvation in the midst of the earth."—lxxiii. 12.

"Either in Judæa which is called the midst of the earth, or in the virginal womb." †

"And He brought them forth by a cloud of day."—lxxvii. 14.

"Behold the Lord cometh into Egypt upon a light cloud."—*Is.* xix. 1.

"By the light cloud, we should either understand properly the Saviour's body which was light and weighed down by no sin; or, at any rate, we should understand the light cloud to be holy Mary, light, because of her virginal conception. Behold the Lord came into the Egypt of this world upon the Virgin, a light cloud; *and brought them forth by a cloud of day.* Well does he say *of day.* For that cloud was not in darkness, but ever in light." ‡

S. Ephrem and other Fathers continually apply the same figures at one time to Mary, at another time to the holy Church; thus the cloud, the fleece, the shower, etc., *v.g.*

"Moses saw from Mount Sinai a column of cloud reaching over one people, chosen out of all nations; and that the shadow withdrew itself from the other nations. Saba stood on Mount Sinai, and marvelled that the gathering together (the congregation) was alone, like the fleece of Gideon which remained dry from the dew that had moistened the whole land." The *Response* of the Hymn from which this passage is taken is: "Glory to the Son, because even on Mount Sinai the Gospel is preached in His Church." §

"All the figures of the temporary tabernacle point to the Church of Christ, and have their completion in her." ||

"He chose not the tribe of Ephraim: but He chose the tribe of Juda, Mount Sion, which He loved."—*Ps.* lxxvii. 67, 68.

"He would not receive flesh from Ephraim, but chose the tribe of Juda, whence Blessed Mary should proceed, from whom He was Himself to be born, that He might raise up the mountain of His love, even the Church." ¶

* S. Methodius, *Orat. De Simeone et Anna.* vii. 8.

† *Brev. in Psalt.* in loc. Int. Opp. S. Hieron.

‡ *Ibid.*

§ S. Ephrem, *Hymn. de Juliano Saba* xx. Lamy, vol. iii. pp. 909-916.

|| *Id., De Natal. Dom.* xii. Morris, p. 53.

¶ *Ibid.*

Ps. lxxxiii. *Wisd.* ix. 1. *Heb.* ix. 3.

"A king's palace was Mary to Thee, O Son of the King, and a Holy of holies by Thee, O High-priest." *

"Truth is sprung out of the earth."—lxxxiv. 12.

"The Mother of God is indeed a myriad times pure. From Adam, from Abraham, from David—nay, from her own self was it in verity that *sprung forth the Truth.*" †

"What is that *truth which is sprung out of the earth? A rod shall come forth from the root of Jesse, and a flower shall come forth from its root.*‡ And in another place: *God hath wrought salvation in the midst of the earth.*§ . . . Behold, then, the Truth: the Saviour from the earth, that is, who is sprung from Mary." ||

"What more wondrous than the Virgin's childbirth? She conceives, and is a Virgin; she brings forth, and is a Virgin. He is created from her whom He created: He brought to her fecundity, corrupted not integrity. From whence is Mary? From Adam. From whence Adam? From earth. If Mary is from Adam, and Adam from earth, it follows that Mary too is from earth. But if Mary is from earth, let us acknowledge the truth of what we sing, *Truth is sprung out of the earth.* What is the benefit she bestowed on us? *Truth is sprung out of the earth, and justice hath looked down from heaven.*" ¶

"Save the son of Thy handmaid."—lxxxv. 16.

"The Lord was son of a handmaid. What handmaid? The same who, on His being announced to her, as to be born of her, made answer, saying: *Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it done to me according to thy word.*" **

Compare with this S. Augustine's interpretation of *Ps.* cxv. 16. "*I am Thy servant, and the Son of Thy handmaid.*"

"He is the Son of the heavenly Jerusalem, which is above, the free Mother of us all; and in truth free from sin, and the handmaid of justice." ††

This shows how intimately connected, and so to say, identical were Mary and the Church in the thought of S. Augustine—as also in the mind of so many of the Fathers—and that what was said of the one applied equally to the other.

"Glorious things are said of thee, O city of God. . . . Shall

* S. Ephrem, *De Natal. Dom.* xii. Morris, p. 53.

† Theodoret. *in loc.* P. G. Tom. 80, p. 1552. The wording in the Greek is somewhat obscure. It is interpreted thus: The earth whence Truth has sprung is Mary, pure above all measure. But Mary, although most pure, had her origin from David, Abraham, Adam, and consequently from earth: Hence what the Psalmist says is verified: *Truth is sprung out of the earth.*

‡ *Is.* xi. 1.

§ *Ps.* lxxxiii. 12.

|| *Brev. in Psalt.* in loc.

¶ S. Augustine, *Serm.* 189. *In Nat. Dom.* vi. n. 2.

** *Id., Enarratio in Ps.* lxxvi.

†† *Ib. in Ps.* cxv. 16.

not Sion say: This man and that man is born in her? And the Highest Himself hath founded her."—lxxxvi. 3, 5.

"Psalmographi plectro cantata est ista Vir(a)go,
Cum daret arte melos vox, lyra, chorda, chorus.
Mater Sion dicit, Homo et homo factus in illa est,
Ipse hanc fundavit, factus in ipsa et homo est,
Sic quoque qui fundavit eam, est Altissimus ipse
Hæc Sion Mater Virgo Maria fuit." *

"Deftly the Psalmist sweeps his tuneful lyre,
And thus prophetic of the Virgin sings:
'A man, a man,' the Mother Sion saith:
'In her is made. Himself hath stablished her,'
Who in herself is made, and is a Man.
Thus He who stablished her is verily
Himself the Lord Most High; and, in good sooth,
The Virgin Mary Mother Sion is."

"Holy Ark, whereby we are saved from the deluge of iniquity; golden thurible, in which the Word, enkindling flesh, filled the world with fragrance, and the sins of disobedience were burnt up; sacred tabernacle, which the spiritual Beseleel built; holy root of Jesse; *City of God; concerning which, glorious things are said of thee*, as speaks David." †

"Go [Gabriel] to the living city, of which the prophet said, *Glorious things are spoken of thee, O city of God.*" ‡

"The prophet was not silent on God being made man in Mary; for he says: *The Mother Sion will say, A man, even a man is made in her, and the Most High hath Himself founded her.* Isaias, also full of the Holy Ghost, thus announces beforehand the mystery of the future Incarnation of the Son of God: *Behold a Virgin shall conceive*, etc." §

"Give of thy milk to Him who made thee what thou art, in order that He might be made in thee: He who before being born chose both the womb wherein He should be born, and the city in which He should be born, and the day whereon He should be born, and Himself formed that which He had chosen. Thus, in fact, was it predicted of old: *The Mother Sion shall say, A man, even a man is made in her, and the Most High hath Himself established her.*" ||

"That they may declare the name of the Lord in Sion, and His praise in Jerusalem."—ci. 22.

"A good messenger always announces new joys. Thus the Angel did to Mary. The Holy Ghost, he says, shall come upon thee. . . ." ¶

* Venantius Fortunatus, Opp. P. i. Lib. viii. cap. vi.

† S. Ephrem, *Orat. ad Deip.* Opp. Gr. T. iii., p. 529.

‡ *Orat.* iii. *De Annunt. Deip.* Int. Opp. S. Greg. Thaumat.

§ *Is.* vii. 14. *Matt.* i. 23. S. Fulgentius, *Epist.* 17, cap. iii. 5. Patr. Lat. Tom. 65, p. 454.

|| *Serm.* 128, al. De temp. 13. *In Nat. Dom.* xii. c. ii. n. 2. Int. Opp. S. August. Appendix. See also S. Greg. Nyss. *infra* in *Is.* viii. 1.

¶ *Brev. in Psalt.* in loc.

"Thou hast put on praise and beauty, and art clothed with light as with a garment."—ciii. 2.

"Mary is the unspotted garment of Him who clothes Himself with light as with a garment." *

"From the womb, before the day-star I begot thee."—cix. 3.

"If this is said of that generation whereby God the Son is begotten of God the Father, *From the womb* signifies from the secret, from the hidden, from the very Father, from the substance of the Father . . . and *Before the day-star* means, before the stars, that is, before all time, from eternity. . . . But if it is here said in the person of the prophet, who says: *The Lord said to my Lord: Sit thou at my right hand*, then there is no doubt but that birth is signified, whereby David's Lord is David's Son. For David could say by reason of ancestry, whereby the Virgin Mary descended from his stem, *From the womb have I begotten Thee*, that is, from the virginal womb, wherein was alone the mother's conception, without seed of father. Fitly too is it said, *Before the morning-star*, because before the rising of day the Lord was born, as is shown from the testimonies of the shepherds who were keeping watch over their flocks." †

"Their seats have sat in judgment, seats upon the house of David."—cxxi. 5.

"Thence they [the Apostles] came to Sion, and what Scripture says was fulfilled: *There their seats sat for judgment, seats upon the house of David.* For with them too was the great house of God, the splendid mountain of God, Mary the Mother of God." ‡

"Behold the inheritance of the Lord are children, the reward, the fruit of the womb."—cxxvi. 3.

"The inheritance of the Lord, then, is that of children, the fruit of the womb received as a recompense. For this fruit is not empty, since God it is that is born, who still continues to have part in the virginal womb. Now His reward is an inheritance, and that reward is children. *As many*, says John, *as received Him, He gave them power to be made the sons of God.*§ And, again, Jesus Christ says Himself: *My little children, yet a little while I am with you.*‖ These children, then, are the inheritance, and the inheritance of the Fruit of the womb. And the Lord is the fruit of the womb, in bearing whom the Virgin brought forth the fruit of our life. And this is the reward of Him who willed by being born of the Virgin to become the Fruit of the womb, that the nations whom He should beget as sons by faith should be His inheritance." ¶

"Who is this fruit of the womb, but He of whom it was said: *Behold the inheritance of the Lord, children, the recompense of the fruit of the womb!* That

* S. Ephrem, *Orat. ad Virg.* Opp. Gr. T. iii., p. 528.
† S. Prosper Aquitan., *Expositio in Ps.* cix.
‡ S. Dionysius of Alexandria, *Epist. contr. Paul. Samosatan.*
§ *John* i. 12.
‖ *Ib.* xii. 33.
¶ S. Hilary of Poitiers. Tom. 9, p. 760.

is to say, the inheritance of the Lord is children, and these are the recompense of that fruit which came forth from the womb of Mary. He is indeed the fruit of the womb, the flower of the root, whereof well did Isaias prophesy, saying: *A rod shall go forth from the root of Jesse*, etc." *

"The Lord Himself, born of the Virgin, is become *the fruit of the womb*. Whose assumed humanity has received this recompense, that the Gentiles, called to be amongst the sons, should be His inheritance; as it is written: *He gave them power to be the sons of God, who believe in His name*." †

"Behold we have heard of it in Ephrata: we have found it in the fields of the wood."—cxxxi. 6.

"Here David sets forth what was the object of his desires, and with prophetic eyes beheld about to come, Him whom we believe to have already come. For the Hebrew word ZO, as I learnt from thy teaching,‡ does not signify the Lord's Mother, that is, αὐτὴν, but [the Lord] Himself, that is, αὐτὸν. And therefore David speaks with confidence: *We will go into His tabernacle: we will adore in the place where His feet stood* (*v.* 7). And am I a poor, miserable, sinful woman, accounted worthy to kiss the manger wherein the Lord cried as a little one? and to pray in the cave, wherein the Virgin Mother gave birth to the Infant God? This shall be my rest, because it is the birth-place (patria) of my Lord." §

"The ark is verily the holy Virgin, gilded within and without, who received the treasure of universal sanctification. Arise, O Lord, from the Father's bosom, to raise up again the ruined race of our first parent." ||

"Arise, O Lord, into Thy resting-place: Thou and the ark which Thou hast sanctified."—cxxxi. 8.

"The ark is without doubt the Virgin Mother of God. For if Thou art the gem, with reason is she the ark; and because Thou art the sun, the Virgin will necessarily be called heaven; since Thou art the unfading flower, the Virgin must assuredly be the plant of incorruption and paradise of immortality. Which things Isaias, seeing from afar, exclaimed later on: *Behold a Virgin shall conceive in her womb, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call His name Emmanuel.* ¶ Behold a Virgin. Who is she? The most noble of women, the elect from among virgins, the splendid ornament of our nature, the glory of our mould, who freed Eve from her shame and Adam from

* See *infra*, *Is.* xi. 1. S. Ambrose, *In Luc. Lib.* ii. n. 24.

† *Brev. in Psalt.* in loc. Int. Opp. S. Hieron.

‡ S. Paula is here represented as speaking to S. Jerome.

§ S. Jerome, *Epist.* cviii. 10. *Ad Eustoch. Epitaphium Paulæ Matris.* It is plain from these words of S. Jerome, that had the Hebrew text which he used, expressed the feminine gender, as do the Septuagint, and the Hebrew MSS. which we have, he would have interpreted the passage of the Blessed Virgin, signified under the figure of the Ark (1 *Kings* xvii. 12; vii. 1; 1 *Par.* xiii.; xv. 1, 25, 29; xvi. 1). The Vulgate has *cam;* and the Anglican version, *it*.

|| *Orat. in Deip. Annunciat.* Int. Opp. S. Greg. Thaumaturg.

¶ *Is.* vii. 14.

the curse, who cut off the bold insolence of the dragon, she whom the smoke of concupiscence touched not, nor the worm of pleasure harmed." *

"Of the fruit of thy womb I will set upon thy throne."—cxxxi. 11.

"Christ is called the fruit of the womb, because the Saviour, according to the flesh, is Son of a Virgin Mother, conceived without earthly father by the Holy Ghost." †

PROVERBS.

"Wisdom hath built her a house, she hath hewn her out seven pillars. She hath mingled her wine."—ix. 1, 2.

"Christ, the Wisdom and power of God and the Father, built Himself a house; flesh from the Virgin as He had foretold. *The Word was made flesh, and dwelt in us.* This same the most wise prophet attests. The infinite Wisdom of God, that was before the ages, and affords life to all, built her a house, putting on corporally a temple from a mother who knew not man. *And reared up seven pillars*, even the most fragrant gifts of the Holy Ghost, as says Isaias: *And there shall rest upon Him the seven spirits of God.*‡ *She hath mingled her wine* in the bowl, whereby is meant, that the Saviour, uniting His Godhead like pure wine with the flesh in the Virgin, was born of her at once God and man, without confusion of the one and the other." §

"Praise Him who lay in the womb of the Virgin, and therein built for Himself a royal palace and temple, and there took a vesture wherewith He might be splendidly adorned, and made ready the arms to vanquish His enemies." ||

"Mary was therefore to the Father as a tree, to the Son a Mother, to men the spring of the Eternal Spirit, and the rising of incorruption. . . . By no human generation did the Virgin bring forth, God forbid! but she ministered her own substance without carnal concupiscence, and not of stones wrought with hammer or chisel did *Wisdom build her a house.* No sound of iron was heard in the building, for man had not part in Mary, but the Virgin alone. The stones were polished of themselves and already wrought, not prepared by men: so too the assumption [of flesh by the Word] in Mary was none of man's work, but chosen out from our nature by means of the venerable Virgin. As stones come from the earth, so too the assumption had its origin and growth in nature, whilst the divinity remained immaculate by reason of a nature unstained. As it was the earth alone that produced, so the Virgin alone conceived." ¶

* Hesychius, *Orat. de Virginis laudib.* Biblioth. PP. Græco-Lat. Tom. ii. p. 423.

† S. Prosper of Aquitaine, *Expositio in Ps.* cxxxi.

‡ *Is.* xi. 2.

§ S. Hippolytus, *Comm. in Prov.*, ix. 1. Galland. T. 2, p. 488.

|| S. Ephrem, Serm. ii., *De Nat. Dom.* Opp. Syr. T. ii., p. 405.

¶ *Serm.* Opp. Gr. T. ii., pp. 275, 276.

"Did, then, he (Eutyches) perhaps suppose that Our Lord Jesus Christ is not of our nature, because the angel, sent to the ever-Virgin Mary, said: *The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee; and therefore the Holy that shall be born of thee, shall be called the Son of God?** That because the Virgin's conception was of divine operation, the flesh of Him conceived was not of the nature of her who conceived? But not so is to be understood that generation singularly wonderful and wonderfully singular, that by reason of the novelty of creation, what is proper to the race should be set aside. For the Holy Ghost gave fecundity to the Virgin, and the true nature of a body is taken from a body. *And so Wisdom built her a house: The Word was made flesh, and dwelt in us*, that is, in that flesh which He assumed from man, and which the spirit of rational life animated." †

"What we have learnt we believe, what we believe we preach, namely, that the Son of God begotten of the Father before all ages, and co-eternal with the Father by everlasting and consubstantial equality, came into this world by the womb of the Virgin elected for this sacrament of piety, in whom and of whom *Wisdom built her a house*, and the unchangeable Godhead of the Word fitted to Itself the form of a servant to the likeness of flesh of sin." ‡

"No figures would fulfil the sacrament of our reconciliation that had been ordained from eternity, because as yet the Holy Ghost had not come upon the Virgin, nor the power of the Most High overshadowed her, whereby—*Wisdom building her a house* within the inviolate bowels of Mary—the Word might be made flesh, and the form of God and the form of a servant meeting together in one person, the Creator might be born in time; and He by whom all things were made, Himself be generated amongst all things. For unless a new man made to the likeness of flesh of sin took to himself our oldness (vetustatem), and the Consubstantial with the Father condescended to be consubstantial also with his Mother, and the alone free from sin united to Himself our nature; mankind would be universally kept captive under the yoke of the devil, nor could we profit by the victory of the triumpher, had it been achieved outside our nature." §

"Why marvellest thou at this, O man? It behoved God thus to be born, when He deigned to become man. Such did He make her, He who was made of her. For before being made, He was. And because He was Almighty, He could be made, remaining what He was. He made a Mother for Himself when He was with the Father, and when He was being made of His Mother, He remained in the Father." ||

"Many daughters have gathered together riches; thou hast surpassed them all."—xxxi. 29.

"What sufficiently worthy praises shall we bestow on her whose merit is above all things of earth? For if Paul could say of other saints, *of whom the*

* *Luke* i. 35.

† S. Leo, *Epist.* xxviii. al. xxiv. *Ad Flavian. Constantinopol.*, cap. 2.

‡ Serm. 25, *In Nativ. Dom.* v. c. 2.

§ *Epist.* xxxi. al. xxvii. *Ad Pulcheriam Augustam*, cap. ii.

|| S. Augustine, Serm. 186. *In Nativ. Dom.* iii. c. i. n. i.

world was not worthy,* what shall we say of the Mother of God, who shone as much beyond all the martyrs in splendour, as the sun surpasses with its blaze the twinkling rays of the stars? Right meet it is that we should cry out in that eulogy of Solomon, *Many daughters have wrought virtue, but thou art pre-eminent, and hast surpassed them all*, O sacred Virgin, on whose account with reason the angels, sent for the ministry of man, exult; who of old turned away from the human race. But now Gabriel rejoices that to him is entrusted the news of the Conception, and with much honour presents himself to the Virgin." †

ECCLESIASTES.

"Blessed is the land whose king is noble," etc.—x. 17.

"Blessed art thou, O land, whose king is son of the noble-born. Blessed land of the Church, whose King is Christ, Son of the noble-born; coming down from Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, of the lineage also of the prophets, and all the saints over whom sin had not ruled; for which reason they were truly free. Of whom was born the Virgin, yet more free, holy Mary, having no shoot, no germ at the side; but all her fruit broke out into the flower, that speaks in the Canticle of Canticles: *I am the flower of the field, and the lily of the valleys.*" ‡

THE CANTICLE OF CANTICLES.

"Let Him kiss me with the kiss of His mouth."—i. 1.

"Hereby is signified the grace of the Holy Spirit coming down from above, as the Angel said to Mary: *The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee.*" §

"The Church ceases not to kiss the feet of Christ: and hence in the Canticle of Canticles, she is not content with one but many kisses. For like holy Mary, || she is intent on all His utterances, and takes in all His words. When the Gospel or a Prophet is being read, she keeps all His sayings in her heart." ¶

"Thy name is as oil poured out."—*v.* 2.

"With this unguent it was that Mary was anointed. Virgin she conceived, and Virgin brought forth a good odour, even the Son of God. . . . She who has this unguent receives Christ: hence says that spouse who had Him: *I opened to my brother, my brother passed in.*** How did He pass in? He entered into the interior of the mind; as was said to Mary; *Thine own soul also a sword shall pass through.* †† *For the word of God is living, penetrating as a sharp sword, and searching into the innermost senses, and the secrets of the heart.*" ‡‡

* *Heb.* xi. 38. † S. Basil of Seleucia. *Orat. in Deip.*
‡ *Cant.* ii. 1. S. Jerome, *Comment in Eccles.* Opp. T. iii. Col. 476, 7.
§ S. Ambrose, *in Ps.* cxviii. *Serm.* ii. n. 16. || *Luke* ii. 51.
¶ *Epist.* xli. 18. ** *Cant.* v. 6.
†† *Luke* ii. 35. *Heb.* iv. 12.
‡‡ *De Virginitate*, 65, 67. *In Ps.* cxviii. *Serm.* xii.

"All burning is that unguent of grace whereby the Virgin brought forth, and the Lord Jesus assumed the Sacrament of the Incarnation." *

"Take then from this pot of the Moabitess †—the virginity of Mary—of the unguent of heavenly grace; nor fear lest it fail. Since when poured out, it even overflows the more. For its odour hath gone forth over the whole earth, as it is written. *Thy name is as oil poured out: therefore young maidens have loved thee.* Let that same unguent descend into the inmost depths and recesses of your souls, wherewith holy Mary was redolent, not of odours of (earthly) delights, but of the breathings of divine grace." ‡

"I am black, but beautiful, O ye daughters of Jerusalem."—*v.* 4.

"The soul of John, as he reclined on the breast of Jesus, answered, *I am black* . . . black by sin, beautiful by grace. His flesh also said . . . *I am black*, because I have sinned: *beautiful*, because now Christ loves me: for whereas He banished me from Him in Eve, He hath taken me to Himself again through the Virgin, He hath raised me up through Mary." §

"I am the flower of the field, and the lily of the valleys."—ii. 1.

"Who is this flower of sweet odour, but He who spake this, and of whom was written in Isaias: *And there shall come forth a rod out of the root of Jesse, and a flower shall rise up out of his root.*; The Jewish nation is the root, Mary the rod, and Christ is Mary's flower. Hence when He shines forth on our earth, and breathes His fragrance in the field of the soul, or flowers in the Church, we have fear neither of cold nor storm, but await the day of judgment." ¶

"The Virgin is that spotless lily, which brought forth Christ, the fadeless rose." **

"Well too is this flower the Church, since she announces the fruit, even the Lord Jesus Christ, of whom was said to Mary, *Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb.*" ††

"As the lily among thorns, so is my love among the daughters."—*v.* 2.

"Mary, a Virgin included in woman's sex, but free from woman's sin; a Virgin innocent, without spot, free from all fault, inviolate, undefiled, holy in soul and body, as a lily budding in the midst of thorns, unlearned in the evils of Eve." ‡‡

* *In Ps.* cxviii. Serm. iii. 8.

† "It is clear that Mary was descended from a mother of the nation of the Moabites. For *Booz begat Obed of Ruth*, certainly a Moabitess; *and Obed begat Jesse, and Jesse begat King David* (*Matt.* i. 5), of whose seed was born Joseph, to whom was espoused the Virgin Mary—also of the same tribe, for otherwise was not allowed—who was the Mother of Jesus, who is called Christ." S. Gaudentius, *Serm.* ix. *De Evang. Lectione primus.* P. L. Tom. 20, p. 896.

‡ *De Inst. Virg.* cap. xiii. n. 83.

§ *In Ps.* cxviii. Serm. ii. n. 8.

|| *Is.* xi. 1.

¶ *Apolog. David. altera*, cap. viii. 43.

** *Orat. de Laudib. S. Mariæ Deip.* Int. Op. S. Epiphanii.

†† S. Ambrose, *In Ps.* cxviii. Serm. v. 12.

‡‡ S. Theodotus of Ancyra. Hom. vi. *In S. Deip. et in Natal. Dom.* Patr. Gr. Tom. 77, p. 1427.

"Behold He cometh leaping upon the mountains, skipping over the hills."—*v.* 8.

"Upon souls of greater grace He leaps, over souls of lesser grace He skips. Or thus: In what way comes He leaping? It was, so to say, with a leap He came into the world: He was with the Father, He came into the Virgin; and from the Virgin He skipped over into the manger; and He was gleaming in heaven. He went down into the Jordan, ascended the Cross, descended into the tomb, rose again from the tomb, and sits at the right hand of the Father." *

"Arise, make haste, my love, my dove, my beautiful one, and come. For winter is now past, the rain is over and gone."—*vv.* 11, 12.

"Of Mary, it is that Solomon speaks with praises in the Canticles: *Come, my dove, my immaculate one. For winter is now past, the rain is over and gone.* And again: *Come from Libanus, come; thou shalt be crowned.*† With good reason is she bid to come from Libanus, for Libanus means brightness. Because she was bright with many virtues of merit, and more fair, by gifts of the Holy Ghost, than the whiteness of snow, showing forth in all things the simplicity of the dove; for whatever had place in her was all purity and simplicity, all truth and grace, all mercy, and *justice that looked down from heaven.*‡ Immaculate she was, because in nought corrupted; for she *compassed a man* in her womb, as holy Jeremias testifies, § with virginity intact. *A new thing* || in very truth it was, and of all new things the sublimest and mightiest prodigy, when God, whom the universe cannot sustain, nor any one see and live, entered the lodging of the womb, its portal closed, and was in such wise therein carried that God was there entire, and in such wise went from thence, that, as Ezechiel attests, the gate was always shut.¶ Hence is sung of her in the same Canticles: *A garden inclosed, a fountain sealed up. Thy plants are a paradise.*** In very deed a garden of delights, wherein are found all sorts of flowers and odours of virtues: and so inclosed as to know not violation nor corruption from any wily deceits. A fountain sealed, in truth, with the seal of the whole Trinity."††

"*Arise, my love, and come.* Arise, since it is for thee I have risen again. Come, for now the snares are broken: the Virgin hath brought forth: of the Virgin a Child is born. Nought does He owe to woman's heritage, as Son of woman He is not bound."‡‡

"Go out for a moment from the prison of the body, and represent to thyself the thought of the future recompense for present sufferings, a recompense such as eye of man hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor heart of man felt anything comparable. What a day, O Eustochium, will that be when the Virgin Mary, the Mother of the Saviour, will come to meet thee with choirs of angels; when the Spouse Himself will come to receive thee with these words:

* S. Ambrose, *In Isaac et Anima*, cap. iv. 31. See also in *Ps.* cxviii. Serm. vi. 6.

† iv. 8.

‡ *Ps.* lxxxiv. 12.

§ *Jer.* xxxi. 22.

|| *Ib.*

¶ *Ezech.* xliv. 1-3.

** *Cant.* iv. 12, 13.

†† *De Assump. B. M. V.*, Int. Opp. S. Hieron.

‡‡ S. Ambrose, *in Ps.* cxviii. *Serm.* vi. n. 23.

Arise, come, My beloved, My dove, the winter is past, the rains are over, the flowers have appeared in our land." *

"Till the day break and the shadows retire."—*v.* 19.

"How are we not in shadow . . . He came on a light cloud, and being the Power of the Most High, He overshadowed Mary, that so He might transform the body of our humility to become even like to the body of His glory. . . ." †

"For this life is not perfect, but one in shadow. Consequently, that the Man Christ Jesus might be born of the Virgin, the power of the Most High overshadowed His future Mother. For this cause in shadow He came down: from shadow beginning to work out man's salvation, which He was to bring to consummation in the brightness of the eternal sun." ‡

"Who is she that goeth up by the desert, as a pillar of smoke of aromatical spices, of myrrh, and frankincense, and of all the powders of the perfumer?"—iii. 6.

"*As a pillar*, he says, *of smoke of aromatical spices*: meaning thereby that she is replete with many odours of virtues: for the most sweet odour that flowed from her was fragrant even to the angelic spirits. The Mother of God too went up from the desert of the present world, that rod which sprung up of old from the root of Jesse. But the souls of the elect wondered for joy who she was, who by the merits of her virtues could surpass even the dignity of the angels. Of her again the same Holy Spirit says in the Canticles: *Who is she that ascends as the rising dawn, beautiful as the moon, elect as the sun, terrible as an army set in array?* § Now the Holy Spirit is in wonder of admiration because He makes all to be in wonder of admiration at the ascent of this Virgin, that, as the ruddy dawn of day-break, she is so resplendent in her ascent, supported and guarded by many hosts of angels. Hence she is said to be terrible as an army set in array. Since in truth terrible has she become by her virtues as an army set perfectly in array, on all sides supported by guards of holy angels. *Beautiful as the moon*, nay more beautiful than the moon, because now, without any waning, she shines in glory, illumined with heavenly splendours. *Elect as the sun* by the brightness of her virtues, because the Sun of Justice Himself elected her, that He might be born of her."

"Behold threescore valiant ones of the most valiant of Israel surrounded the bed of Solomon."—*v.* 7.

"Gift more excellent than all price, ornament more costly than all goods. Bed of Solomon around which stand the threescore mighty ones, that is, the words of divinely inspired Scripture. Place full of light, whence the rays of salvation have shone forth to the whole world." ¶

"Rejoice thou entirely immaculate divine throne of God. Rejoice,

* S. Jerome, Ep. 18, *ad Eustochium.*
† *Philip.* iii. 21. S. Ambrose, *in Ps.* cxviii. Serm. iii. 19.
‡ *Ib.* Serm. v.
§ *Cant.* vi. 9.
|| *De Assumptione*, Int. Opp. S. Hieron.
¶ S. Ephrem, *Orat. in Deip.* Opp. Græc. T. iii., p. 530.

splendid sole Mother of God. Rejoice thou most holy bed of Solomon. . . . Rejoice thou Queen of Adam's race. Rejoice thou sword of evil spirits." *

"Go forth and see King Solomon in the crown, wherewith his mother crowned him in the day of his espousals, and in the day of the joy of his heart, because he made for himself, says he, charity from the daughters of Jerusalem."—*vv.* 10, 11.

". . . Blessed Mother Jerusalem, and blessed womb of Mary which crowned so great a Lord. She crowned Him, when she formed Him; she crowned Him, when she brought Him forth. For though she formed Him without any work of her own—since the Holy Ghost came upon the Virgin, and hence He Himself says, *Thine eyes did see My unwrought being* (Inoperatum meum viderunt oculi tui) †—yet, by the very fact of her conceiving and bringing Him forth for the salvation of all, she placed upon His head a crown of eternal piety, so that by the faith of them that believe, *Christ might become the head of every man.*‡ Hence unwrought was even the flesh of Christ; for that the Virgin might conceive Him, He, by the, so to say, strange and new mystery of the Incarnation, through the grace of a divine disposition, Himself assumed all His flesh from the Virgin, without any human co-operation, and in her formed the members of the last Adam, the spotless man." §

"Let Thy Mother adore Thee, and place upon Thy head the ornaments of the diadem, as his mother placed of old on Solomon what were his; though he, for the rest, by following heathen pravity, debased the honour of his dignity. But Thou hast most amply adorned her the offspring of David from whom Thou hast Thyself come. Thou hast magnificently exalted her throne, propagated her family far and wide, and everywhere advanced her lyre. May this same glorious parent of Thine flourish in the mouths of all to the end of time. May the womb that bore Thee be filled with benediction. No one, moreover, can worthily praise Joseph, whom Thou, the true and natural Son of the Eternal Father, didst not refuse to have for Thine adopted father: Thou most loving Pastor, who wert sent to seek the sheep that were lost, and didst so long labour until Thou hadst found them and brought them back to the fold.

"That I should have conceived a Son so great—we may imagine the Virgin Mary saying to herself—has marvellously gladdened me beyond all who have obtained salvation. That I have given Him birth, has graced me beyond all that are eminent for sanctity. Now shall I enter into the verdant orchards of Paradise, and there praise God, where Eve unhappily fell. This will be perhaps of no little account, since He has chosen me for His Mother, and Himself condescended to be my Son, because I was pleasing to Him beyond all other women." ||

"Thy lips, my spouse, are as a dropping honey-comb, honey and milk are under thy tongue."—iv. 2.

* S. Ephrem, *Orat. in Deip.* Opp. Græc. T. iii., p. 535.
† *Ps.* cxxxviii. 16.
‡ 1 *Cor.* xi. 3.
§ S. Ambrose, *De Inst. Virg.* cap. xvi. 97, 98.
|| S. Ephrem, *De divers. Serm.* i. *De Nativ. Dom.* Opp. Syr. T. iii., p. 600.

"The tongue of Mary is sweet as honey, and her lips as the dropping honey-comb. *Beautiful in her steps*, more beautiful is she in her ways."* See *infra*, vii. 1.

"My sister, my spouse, is a garden enclosed, a garden enclosed, a fountain sealed up."—*v.* 12.

"In being closed and sealed, it is like the Mother of the Lord, Mother and Virgin. Hence too in the Saviour's new sepulchre which was hewn in the hardest (some read, purest) rock, no one else was laid before or after. And yet this perpetual Virgin is Mother of many virgins; for we next read: *Thy plants are a paradise of pomegranates with the fruit of apples* (*v.* 13). By pomegranates and apples, is meant the assemblage of all virtues in virginity. *My beloved is white and ruddy* (*v.* 10). White by virginity, ruddy by martyrdom. And because white and ruddy, is quickly added: *His throat most sweet, and he is all lovely* (*v.* 16). The Virgin Bridegroom, after having been praised by the Virgin bride, praises in turn the Virgin bride, and says to her: *Beautiful are thy steps in shoes, daughter of Aminadab* (vii. 1), or, as it is interpreted, Of the people that offers itself freely: since virginity is voluntary: and for this cause, the steps of the Church are commended."†

"Mary was *the garden enclosed, the fountain sealed*, to whom no guile could find entrance, against whom no fraud of the enemy could prevail, but who was ever holy in mind and body."‡

"Christ is a Virgin, and the Mother of this one Virgin is herself a perpetual Virgin, Mother and Virgin. For the doors being shut, Jesus entered in; and also in her sepulchre, which was new, and hewn in most hard rock, was no one either before or afterwards laid. She is *a garden enclosed, a fountain sealed;* that same fountain, whence, says Joel,§ flows the river which waters the torrent, whether it be one of cords or thorns—cords of sinners wherewith they were before bound, or thorns that were choking the householder's crops. She is the Eastern gate, whereof Ezechiel speaks, always shut and full of light, which closing on itself, lets pass the Holy of Holies; whereby the Sun of Justice, even our High Priest, according to the order of Melchisedech, enters in and goes out. Let them tell me how it was that Jesus entered in, the doors being shut; when He showed His hands for His disciples to feel, His side to see, together with His bones and flesh, that they might not suppose His body was phantastic, but real, and I will tell them, how the holy Mary is both Mother and Virgin, Virgin after childbirth, and Mother before she was married. Thus, then, as we had begun to say, the Virgin Christ and the Virgin Mary, consecrated in themselves for both sexes the first-fruits of virginity (*virginitatis principia*). The Apostles were either virgins, or continent after their marriage. Bishops, priests, and deacons, are, when chosen, either virgins or widowers, or at any rate remain always chaste after the priesthood."‖

* Theodotus of Ancyra, Hom. vi. *In S. Deip. et in Nat. Dom.* Patr. Gr. Tom. 77, p. 1427.

† S. Jerome, *Adv. Jovinian.* L. i. 31.

‡ *Serm. de Assump.* Int. Op. S. Hieron.

§ *Joel* iii. 18.

S. Jerome, *Epist.* 48, n. 21. *Ad Pammach.* Patr. Lat. Tom. 22, p. 510.

"Hail, full of grace, Gate of heaven, of whom in the Canticles the prophet plainly and openly utters those words: *My sister, my spouse, is a garden enclosed, a garden enclosed, a fountain sealed up.*" *

"God showed that the Virgin was His domicile, wherein, by His entering in, He would keep perpetual the column of chastity, by being born of her, without injury to His Mother's integrity, being conceived without corruption." †

"The Spouse who is sprung from thee, called thee *a closed garden and a sealed fountain*, and such He predicted thee in the Canticles. *A closed garden*, because no knife of corruption nor vintage has come nigh thee; but the flower that is set forth in its fair beauty to mankind from the root of Jesse, ‡ was cultured for thee by the pure and spotless Spirit. *A fountain sealed*, because the river of life that goes forth from thee has filled the earth; whilst, on the other hand, the nuptial branch has in no way exhausted thy fountain." §

"Arise, O north wind, and come, O south wind, blow through my garden, and let the aromatical spices thereof flow."—*v.* 16.

"When Joseph had been delighted with these aromatical spices, he is marked out as son of the King by God. When Mary had been anointed with them, she conceived in her womb the Word; then she reveals new secrets, and a new truth, and a new kingdom, together also with other great and inexplicable mysteries." ||

"O my sister, my spouse, open to Me, my sister, my love, my dove, my undefiled."—v. 1, 2.

"Mary is that beautiful spouse of the Canticles, who put off the old garment, washed her feet, and received the immortal Bridegroom within her own bride-chamber." ¶

"Hail Mary, of all things in the whole world most precious. Hail Mary, dove undefiled. Hail Mary, inextinguishable lamp; for of thee is born the Sun of Justice. Hail Mary, the place of Him who is not held by place." **

"One is my dove, my perfect one is but one. . . . The daughters saw her, and declared her most blessed: the queens and the concubines, and they praised her."—vi. 8.

"This one calls her Mother of light; that one, Star of the sea; another, Throne of God; another, Temple greater than heaven; another, the Chair not

* *Orat. de laudib. S. Mariæ Deip.* Int. Opp. S. Epiphanii.

† S. Gaudentius, Serm. ix. *De Evang. Lectione primus.* Tom. 20, p. 888.

‡ *Is.* xi. 1.

§ Hesychius, *Orat. de Deip. laudib.*

|| S. Hippolytus, ap. Migne Patr. Gr. Tom. 10, p. 627.—"S. Hippolytus," says Simon de Magistris (*Acta Mart. Ostiens.*, p. 274, ex Cod. membr. Vatican. c. iii.), "wrote on the Canticle of Solomon, and shows that from of old God the Word sought His delights in the Church gathered from the Gentiles, but especially in His most holy Virgin Mother. Consequently the Syrians, who gloried in the Virgin as by birth their own, made a very early translation of this Commentary of S. Hippolytus from the Greek into their own tongue: and some fragments of this translation are still extant." He gives that in the text both in Latin and Syriac.

¶ S. Proclus, Orat. vi. 17. *De Deip. laudibus.*

** S. Cyril of Alexandria, *Encom. in Deip.*, at the Council of Ephesus.

inferior to the Cherubic Chair; then another, the garden unsown, fertile, untilled, the vine fruitful with grapes, flourishing exceedingly, intact; the chaste turtle, the dove undefiled; the cloud without corruption, conceiving showers; the sample whose gem is more splendid than the sun; the quarry whence comes forth the uncut stone that covers the whole earth; the ship freighted with merchandise, yet needing no pilot; the treasure that maketh rich." *

"Thou alone, Lady Mother of God, art most high above all the earth. But we with true fidelity bless thee, O Spouse of God, with love we honour, and with honour we worship thee, ever magnifying and with veneration proclaiming thee blessed. For thou art the honour of honours, the reward of rewards, and the sublimity of sublimities." †

"To-day, then, Mary is made for us a heaven bearing the divinity which Christ, without leaving His Father's glory, shut up within the narrow limits of her womb, that He might raise up men to a higher dignity. Her alone did He choose from the universal band of virgins, that she might be the instrument of our salvation. In her the predictions of the just and of all the prophets had their fulfilment. From her went forth that most splendid star, under whose guidance the people that walked in darkness, saw a great light. Mary may be most fitly called by divers names. She is, for example, the temple of the Son of God, who from her went forth in quite another guise from what He entered; for in entering into her womb He was without body; but He came forth clothed with a body. She is that mystical *new heaven*,‡ wherein dwelt the King of kings as in His mansion, from which He shot forth to earth, bearing about Him a certain earthly form and likeness. She is *the vine bringing forth a pleasant odour*; § and since her fruit differed much from the nature of the tree, it was necessary that it should borrow a likeness from the tree. She is *the fountain going forth from the house of the Lord*, from which for the thirsty flowed the streams of living water, of which if any one but only once shall taste, he shall not thirst for ever.¶ He verily is mistaken, my dearly beloved, who should suppose that this day of reparation can be compared with that other of creation. For in the beginning the earth was formed, to-day it is renewed: in the beginning, on account of Adam's crime, it was cursed in his work,** but to-day peace and security are restored to it: in the beginning by the sin of our first parents death passed to all men,†† but to-day through Mary we are translated from death to life: in the beginning the serpent getting possession of the ears of Eve, thence spread his poison throughout her whole body; to-day Mary through her ears received the champion of everlasting bliss. Hence what was the instrument of death, the same has proved to be that of life." ‡‡

"The Blessed Mother of God, whose planting is as of a rose in Jericho,§§

* Hesychius, *Orat. De Deip. laudib.*

† S. Ephrem, *Orat. ad Deip.* Opp. Gr. T. iii., p. 544.

‡ *Apoc.* xxi. 1.

§ *Eccli.* xxiv. 23.

|| *Joel* iii. 18.

¶ *Eccli.* xxiv. 29; *John* iv. 13, 14.

** *Gen.* iii. 17.

†† *Rom.* v. 12.

‡‡ S. Ephrem, De diversis *Serm.* iii.; *De laud. Deip.* Opp. Syr. Tom. iii., p. 607 a-f.

§§ *Eccli.* xxiv. 18.

shines forth more brightly, and the whiteness of her virginity appears with more splendid lustre, when the excellence of the Saints and their charity are set side by side with her; since thus will be more fully seen and commended the brilliancy and glory of her who, raised as she is above the choirs of angels, is now proclaimed blessed, aye, now most blessed. For albeit the nature of the angels is higher, yet not greater is their grace, for they too have been saved by gratuitous grace that they might not fall. Hence David says: *By the word of the Lord the heavens were established; and all the power of them by the spirit of His mouth.** Now if by the spirit of His mouth all their power subsists, it is certain that the blessed and glorious Virgin Mary, on whom the Holy Ghost came down, and who bore God entire in her womb for nine months, merited, as we must believe, more ample privileges of virtues, and received grace that was extolled even by the angels. Hence though their virtue and firmness of perpetuity is wonderful, yet more wonderful is this in Mary whom the power of the Most High overshadowed, so that beyond all angelic power was what was done in her, even the mystery that should be admirable for all ages. Hereby moreover greater grace was henceforth bestowed even upon the angels, since by her were being re-established (quum instaurantur ab ea), † all creatures that venerate and adore above them Christ as King and Lord, who was born of the same Virgin. Hence, too, Mary is the more worthy of veneration, the more she is full of grace; and the more highly she is raised by the power of the Most High, the more splendid is she in glory. Since being full of grace, full of God, full of virtues, she cannot but possess fully the glory of the Eternal, which she received most fully in order to become Mother of the Saviour. She it is *whom all the daughters of Sion saw, and declared most blessed, and the queens praised her.* Since they saw her so great, that, how great, no mortal could ever finish telling; but how much more great that God, who made her such and so great, that by her He Himself was made." ‡

"One may interpret in another way the Spouse to mean the Lord's spotless flesh, for the sake of which He left the Father, came down hither, and cleaved to it, and becoming man dwelt therein. It is in truth one: in a word, stainless and undefiled, and excelling all in beauty and grace of sanctity, so that none of those who even much pleased God, can come near to it, if virtue is taken into account." §

"Of this God then, Only-begotten, she, Mary, is Virgin Mother, worthy of God; the spotless one of the Holy and Spotless; the one of Him who is One; the one alone, of Him who is One Alone." ||

"Who is she that cometh forth as the morning rising, fair as the moon, bright as the sun, terrible as an army set in array?" —*v.* 9.

"When thou, most holy one, didst as brightest day shine forth upon the world and bring forth that Sun of Justice, the hateful horror of darkness was dispelled, the power of the tyrant was brought to nought, death was destroyed,

* *Ps.* xxxii. 6. † *Eph.* i. 10.
‡ *Serm. de Assumpt.* Int. Opp. S. Hieron.
§ S. Methodius, *Conviv. dec. Virg.* Orat. vii. 7.
|| *Hom.* i. *in Matt.*, Int. Opp. Origenis.

hell swallowed up, all enmity done away before the sight of peace; noxious diseases, on the breaking forth of the blessing of health, were bidden to depart far away, and the whole wide world perfused with the light of the clearest and most pure truth. To all which things Solomon alluding in the Canticles thus begins: *My beloved to me, and I to Him, till the day dawn again, and the shadows return.*" *

"Scatter our enemies visible and invisible; be thou a tower of strength, an armament of war, a strong battle set in array, a leader and invincible defender, to us, unworthy though we be, from the face of our foes." †

"How beautiful are thy steps in shoes, O prince's daughter! The joints of thy thighs are like jewels, that are made by the hand of a skilful workman. Thy navel is like a round bowl never wanting cups. Thy belly is like a heap of wheat, set about with lilies."—vii. 1, 2.

"Imitate Mary to whom admirably applies what was prophesied of the Church: *Beautiful are seen thy steps in shoes, O daughter of Aminadab* (or of the Prince). Because with beauty did the Church go forth in the preaching of the Gospel. Beautifully, too, goes forth the soul, that uses the body as though a shoe, so that whither it will, it may bear about its step without let or hindrance. In this shoe with beauty went forth Mary, who with chastity inviolate, a Virgin most pure, gave birth to the Author of salvation. Hence well says John: *I am not worthy to loose the latchet of His shoes*, that is, I am not worthy to comprehend the mystery of the Incarnation within the narrow bounds of human intelligence, nor to compass it in the meanness of poor speech. Hence too Isaias saith: *Who shall declare His generation?* Beautiful, therefore, are the steps, whether of Mary or of the Church, since beautiful are the steps of the Evangelists.

"How beautiful also are those things that were prophesied of Mary under the figure of the Church—if however we keep before our minds not the members of the body, but the mysteries of Christ's generation. For to Mary is it said: *The joints of thy thighs are like jewels that are made by the hands of a skilful workman. Thy navel is like a round bowl never wanting cups.*‡ *Thy belly is like a heap of wheat set about with lilies.*§ Whereby is shown how excellently ordered and self-sufficing in all things was the birth of Christ from the Virgin, and that as conquerors in earthly battles are wont to adorn the necks of the combatants with gifts of chains and collars in reward for their bravery, so Christ has taken off our yoke, in order to crown His faithful ones with marks of distinction in recompense for their virtue. The round bowl, too, really signifies the womb of Mary, wherein was Divine Wisdom, who mingled in this bowl His own wine, ministering withal, by the plenitude of His Divinity, unfailing grace of pious understanding and knowledge.

"In the Virgin's womb germinated at the same time *the heap of wheat*, and the grace of the lily flower, since she was herself putting forth the grain of wheat, and the lily: the grain of wheat, according to what is written: *Amen*,

* *Cant.* vi. 2, ii. 16, iv. 6; S. Methodius, *De Sim. et Anna.* v.

† S. Ephrem, *Orat. ad Deip.* Opp. Gr. T. iii. p. 551.

‡ *i.e.*, wine; Crater tornatilis non deficiens mixto. S. Amb.

§ Acervus tritici muniti inter lilia. S. Ambr.

*amen, I say to you, unless the grain of wheat, falling into the ground, die, itself remaineth alone.** But because from one grain of wheat there is made a heap, that prophecy is fulfilled: *And the vales shall abound with corn;* † for that grain having died, brought forth very much fruit. And so this grain has satiated all men with a perpetual food of heavenly gifts: and that prophetic word from the mouth of the same David is accomplished: *He fed them with the fat of wheat, and filled them with honey out of the rocks.* ‡ That in this grain was also the lily, divine Scripture testifies: for it is written, *I am the flower of the field and the lily of the valleys. . . .* § From that same womb of Mary, therefore, it was that *the heap of wheat fenced among the lilies* was poured forth into the world, when of her Christ was born, to whom says the prophet David: *Thou shalt bless the crown of the year with Thy goodness,*|| etc."

"By the thigh we understand the sign of generation, according to those words: *Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, O Thou most Mighty,* ¶ whereby is signified that the Son of God when He emptied Himself, girt with the Divinity of the Word, and shod with His human generation, went forth from the Virgin to give salvation to all. And by the joints are meant such precious ornaments as matrons are used to wear on their necks. So great therefore is understood to be the progress of the Church, that it is compared to the most costly ornaments, and to chains and necklaces of conquerors: for such are the decorations of warriors. And hence Symmachus has ἐπιτραχήλια, that is, what is worn around the neck. Thus then, the generation of Christ from the Virgin, or, if you choose, the propagation of the Church, has, so to speak, figuratively crowned the necks of the faithful with necklaces beautifully wrought by the hand of a skilful workman, but really with spiritual adornments of true virtue."**

"Who is this that cometh up from the desert, flowing with delights, leaning upon her beloved?"—viii. 5.

"She it is that cometh up, clinging to the Divine Word as a vine to a vine-stock."††

"Hail full of grace, thou ever-blooming vine." ‡‡

"Love is strong as death . . . the lamps thereof are fire and flames."—*v.* 6.

"Mary was all on fire with divine love. As there was nothing earthly in her to disturb her affections, she was ever burning, and, so to say, inebriated with this love." §§

ECCLESIASTICUS.

"From the woman came the beginning of sin, and by her we all die."—xxv. 33.

* *John* xii. 2.
† *Ps.* lxiv. 14.
‡ *Ps.* lxxx. 19.
§ *Cant.* ii. 1.
|| *Ps.* lxiv. 12-14. S. Ambrose, *De Inst. Virg.* cap. xiv., xv. n. 94.
¶ *Ps.* xliv. 4.
** *Id. in Ps.* cxviii., Serm. xviii. 18.
†† *Id., De Isaac et Anima*, cap. v.
‡‡ Serm. i., *In Annunt. B. M. V.*, Int. Opp. S. Greg. Thaum.
§§ *De Assump. B. M. V.*, Int. Opp. S. Hieron.

"A woman was cause of the world being originally taken captive in paradise, and of its since growing old, and growing old in the filth of vice. For so is it written: *From the woman came the beginning of sin, and by her we all die.* And says the Apostle Paul, *The man was not seduced; but the woman being seduced came in the transgression.** Through her then the world, oppressed by miserable bondage, bent its aching neck under the yoke of the devil. And whilst the world's chariot was rolling on through circling ages, there was none to heal: and whilst with sins multiplying, and the entire world rushing headlong to ruin, and its members crumbling to dust, there was no one to succour. Hence the cause comes back to woman, and the old source must find its end by means of another like source (et origo per originem detruncatur). The origin of sin was extinguished by Christ's Mother, the generation of impiety was cut off by the generation of piety, the stock of death by the stock of life." †

ISAIAS.

"The whole head is sick, and the whole heart is sad. From the sole of the foot unto the top of the head, there is no soundness therein: wounds and bruises," etc.—i. 5, 6.

"Most great was the wound of the human race, from the feet even to the head nothing in it was sound." ‡

Compare with this the following:—

"And as the Son Himself alone knew the manner of His conception and birth, that is to say, by preserving His Mother incorrupt, from her feet to her head blessed (*ἀπὸ ποδῶν ἕως κεφάλης εὐλογημένην*)." §

"And in the last days the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be prepared on the top of mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills, and all nations shall flow unto it."—ii. 2.

"Under the name of this mountain may also be signified the most Blessed ever-Virgin Mary Mother of God: since a mountain was she, who by the dignity of her election transcended all height of elected nature. Is not Mary a lofty mountain, who, to reach to the conception of the Eternal Word, raised the summit of her merits above all the choirs of angels, even to the throne of the Deity? Isaias, prophesying of the all-surpassing dignity of this mountain, says: *In the last days the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be prepared on the top of the mountains.* || She was indeed the mountain on the top of the mountains, because the height of Mary shone forth above all the Saints. And as a mountain denotes height, so does a house denote dwelling. Fitly, of a truth, is she called both a mountain and a house, who—resplendent, as she became, with incomparable merits—prepared her holy womb for the

* 1 *Tim.* ii. 14.

† Serm. 120, *In Nat. Dom.* iv. 2, Int. Opp. S. Augustin.

‡ S. Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catech.* xii. 7.

§ *Epist. ad Paul. Samos.*, of the 4th cent., under the name of S. Dionysius of Alexandria.

|| S. Cyril interprets this of the Church, which he calls "chaste, holy, immaculate, high above all creatures."

Only-begotten of God wherein to repose. For Mary would not have become the mountain on the top of the mountains, had not divine fecundity raised her above the summit of the angels. And she would not be the House of the Lord, had not the Divinity of the Word lain in her womb, by His Humanity which He assumed. With just reason too is she called a fruitful mountain, since of her the best fruit, that is, the New Man is generated. And she verily it was that the prophet beheld in her beauty and adorned with the glory of her fecundity, when he said: *There shall come forth a rod out of the root of Jesse, and a flower shall rise out of his root.** And of the fruit of this mountain David exulting before God, says, *Let the people, O God, confess to Thee: let all the people give praise to Thee. The earth hath yielded her fruit.* † The earth hath indeed yielded her fruit, because whom the Virgin brought forth, she conceived not by material operation, but by the overshadowing of the Holy Ghost. ‡ Hence to the same king and prophet was said by the Lord: *Of the fruit of thy womb I will set upon My throne.* § Rightly then is she called Mount Ephraim, since, whilst she is herself exalted to the ineffable dignity of the Divine Maternity, in her fruit the dry shoots of human nature begin once more to grow green.

"A man from Ramatha Sophim is thus made from Mount Ephraim: in that He who created the angels by the power of His Divinity, has taken the form of humanity from the flesh of the glorious Virgin." ||

"I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne high and elevated," etc.—vi. 1-4.

"Behold, as a throne high and lifted up by the glory of Him who fashioned it, the Virgin Mother is made ready-prepared—and that most evidently for the King, the Lord of hosts." ¶

"Therefore the Lord Himself shall give you a sign. Behold a Virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and His name shall be called Emmanuel."—vii. 14.

"The Lord the King of glory will Himself come down into the Virgin's womb, and will go in and out by the Eastern gate which is ever shut: ** whereof Gabriel said to the Virgin: *The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee. And therefore also the Holy which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.* †† And in the Proverbs, *Wisdom hath built herself a house.*" ‡‡

* *Is.* xi. 1. † *Ps.* lxvi. 6, 7.

‡ *Luke* i. 35. § *Ps.* cxxxi. 11.

|| S. Gregory the Great, *Exposit. in libros Regum.* In 1 *Reg.* i., Patr. Lat. Tom. 79, p. 23. It is more generally held by the learned, that the Commentary on the First book of Kings was put together by S. Gregory's disciple Claudius, Abbot of the Monastery of Classa, from Homilies of the holy doctor which he had collected.

¶ S. Methodius, *Orat. de Simeon. et Anna* iii., P. G. Tom. 18, p. 322.

** *Ezech.* xliv. †† *Luke* i. 35.

‡‡ *Prov.* ix. 1., S. Jerome, *Commentary in Is. Prophet.*, L. iii. *In loc.* He then goes on to show that the word *Virgin* here denotes emphatically in the Hebrew a young virgin, hidden and set apart (puellam, adolescentulam, absconditam et secretam).

"Hence Emmanuel sprung from the holy Virgin, that Virgin who said: *How shall this be done, because I know not man?* To whom the Angel gave answer: *The Spirit of the Lord shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High overshadow thee.* This Virgin was not subject to the law of purification in Deuteronomy.* Since, without human generation, she became Emmanuel's Mother, pure, and holy, and undefiled; and after having become Mother, remained still a Virgin." †

"Mary was not like other mothers, but a pure Virgin not amenable to the Levitical law." ‡

"And for this reason it was that Christ was born of a Virgin, who should after His birth be also married, that in Christ the two titles of sanctity might be distinctly marked by His having a Mother who was both a Virgin, and married also to one only husband." §

"We have witnessed this heavenly combat. And the servant of God has been crowned conqueror in the contest. This is that combat which the prophet Isaias foretold when he says: *No little contest have ye with men; for God Himself provides the combat.*' And to show what this combat is, he adds: *Behold a Virgin shall conceive and bring forth a Son, and ye shall call His name Emmanuel.* Here is the combat." ¶

"Come then Eve, now Mary, who not only brought us the incentive to virginity, but also gave us God. Whence Isaias joyful and exulting at so great a gift says: *Behold a Virgin shall receive in her womb and shall bring forth a Son, and His name shall be called Emmanuel, which is being interpreted God with us.* Whence is this gift? Not from earth assuredly, but from heaven did Christ choose for Himself this vessel, whereby He might descend, and consecrated it a temple of purity. By one woman He came down, but many women has He called. Hence too the Lord's Mary found this her name, which signifies, God from my origin (Deus ex genere meo)." **

"Thy Only-begotten Son Himself, when about to come to earth to take to Himself what was lost, could not find a more pure generation of His flesh than to dedicate the court of the heavenly Virgin for His own habitation, in whom might be the sanctuary of immaculate chastity, and the temple of God." ††

"What *sign*, forsooth, is it that a young woman not a virgin should bring forth? And which more fittingly should have given birth to Emmanuel (that

* *Lev.* xii. 2.

† *Comment in Isa.*, in loc., Int. Opp. S. Basilii. It is disputed whether this Commentary is by S. Basil, but agreed amongst the learned that it was written about the fourth century. See also S. Cyril of Alex., *De adorat. in sp. et verit.*, Lib. 15, Patr. Gr. Tom. 68, p. 1005.

‡ Origen, Hom. viii., *in Levit.* xii. 2.

§ Tertullian, *De Monogamia*, cap. viii., P. L. Tom. 2. It is by the virginity of Mary that S. Justin (*Tryph.* c. 100) confutes Trypho and the Ebionites, who denied the divinity of Jesus Christ, as S. Ignatius confuted the Docetæ, who denied His humanity, by her maternity. Thus S. Justin appeals to this passage of Isaias: *Ecce Virgo concipiet.* Trypho would read ἡ νεᾶνις, but S. Justin shows from the lxx. that it is ἡ παρθένος (c. c. 43, 67).

|| Compare *Is.* vii. 13, 14 with ix. 3-6.

¶ S. Cyprian, *On the Martyrdom of S. Mappallicus.*

** S. Ambrose, *De Instit. Virg.* cap. v. n. 33.

†† *Ibid.* cap. xvii., nn. 104, 105.

is, God with us)—a woman who conceived in the ordinary way, or a pure and spotless Virgin?" *

"And the Lord said to me: Take thee a great book, and write in it with a man's pen."—viii. 1.

"We understand then by the new book, the Virgin. For as a fresh sheet of paper is pure, since nothing is written on it, so also is the holy Virgin, who knew not man." He then interprets the words of *Ps.* lxxxvi. 5. †

"And I went to the prophetess, and she conceived in her womb, and bore a son."—*v.* 3.

"By these words Isaias shows the entrance of Gabriel to Mary, when he came to bring her the glad tidings that she was to give birth to the Son of God, the Saviour of the world, as a pure Virgin by the Holy Ghost." ‡

"Although human speech cannot tell forth the mysteries of the Nativity, yet Gabriel says to the Virgin herself who conceived: *The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee. And therefore also the Holy which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.* Some interpret the prophetess to be the holy Mary. And that Mary was a prophetess there is no doubt, since she says in the Gospel: *Behold from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed: because He that is mighty hath done great things to me.*"

S. Jerome had just before explained the prophetess also of the Holy Ghost, who he says in the Hebrew is expressed in the feminine gender. § Elsewhere, in enumerating the holy women who were renowned for their wisdom and prophetic spirit, he says:—

"Not to speak of Anna and Elisabeth, and other holy women, all of whose, so to say, tiny sparks (igniculos) of stars the bright light of Mary eclipses and hides." ||

The holy doctor speaks also of Mary as most excellently versed in the Scriptures.

S. Ambrose says:—

"We shall not easily find another woman who prophesied more abundantly than the Lord's Mother." ¶

S. Augustine referring to Our Lord's words, *Matt.* xi. 13, mentions those recorded in the New Testament as having prophesied before John, and adds:—

"We know, too, from the Gospel (*Luke* i. 44-55) that the Lord's Virgin Mother herself prophesied before John." **

* Origen, *Contr. Cels.*, Lib. i. n. 3.
† S. Gregory of Nyssa, *Testim. adv.* Judæos. iii.
‡ S. Epiphanius, *Hær.* 68, 16.
§ S. Jerome, *Comment. in Is. Proph.* L. iii. in loc.
|| *Prolegom. in Sophon. Prophetam.*
¶ *Exposit. Evang. sec. Luc.* Lib. ii. 35.
** *De Civ. Dei*, Lib. xvii. c. 22.

"That Mary was the prophetess whom Isaias went to by a prescience of the Spirit, no one would dispute who remembers the words of Mary which she uttered under the influence of the spirit of prophecy. For what is it she says? *My soul doth magnify the Lord. . . . For behold from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed.* Now if thou payest attention to all her words, surely thou wilt not contentiously deny that she was the prophetess, since the Spirit of the Lord came upon her, and the power of the Most High overshadowed her." *

"Thou hast asked us, why Mary the Mother of God is called by Isaias a prophetess. Remark her words in the Gospel: *He hath regarded the humility of His handmaid. For behold from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed.* And if thou dost not find that the holy Mary is called Blessed in all nations and in every tongue, because she bore in her womb God made flesh of the Holy Ghost and of her, and brought Him forth without corruption or any sort of stain, then give no credence to Isaias. But if throughout the world she is called Blessed, extolled with praise, hymned forth and eulogised—she, that land unsown, and unwrought—together with her All-blessed and Eternal Fruit, why dost thou further dispute whether Mary the Mother of God should be called a prophetess?" †

"Mary, being most wise, preserved in her heart all the words of Jesus Christ, and kept them for us, and caused them to be registered, in order that, according to her instruction, their recital and dictation should be published and preached throughout the world, and given us to read." ‡

"Mary remained after the Ascension of her Son for a time on earth with the Apostles, that she might instruct them more fully: since she had seen and handled all things more familiarly, and was therefore better able to express them. For things that we better know, we better utter." §

"There shall come forth a rod out of the root of Jesse, and a flower shall rise out of his root, and the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him."—xi. 1.

"That rod was the Virgin Mary, who came forth from the seed of David, of whom was born, according to the flesh, Christ the flower of the patriarchs. For God who in Numbers wrought a miracle for an ass to speak, willed to work a far greater miracle that Christ might be born of the Virgin." ¶

"Mary was the rod, graceful, delicate, and Virgin, that blossomed forth Christ as a flower, through the perfect purity of her body." **

"The Mother of the Lord is the rod, simple, pure, sincere, without any germ extrinsically cleaving to it; and, after the likeness of God, of itself alone fruitful. The Flower of the rod is Christ, who says, *I am the flower of the*

* S. Basil, *Exposit. in Is. Proph.* in loc.

† S. Nilus, *Epist.* Lib. ii. *Ep.* 212.

‡ Eusebius of Emisa, *Hom. in Evangel.*

§ *De Assump. B. M. V.* Int. Opp. Hieron.

|| *Numbers* xxii. 21-33.

¶ Evagrius Monachus (c. 400). *Altercatio int. Theophilum Christianum, et Simonem Judæum,* Patr. Lat. Tom. 20, p. 1171.

** *Serm.* 28. Int. Opp. S. Ambr. See also *infra,* on *Luke* i. 42.

*field, and the lily of the valleys;** who also in another place is set forth as *the stone cut out from the mountain without hands;*† whereby the prophet signifies, that Virgin He is to be born of a Virgin."‡

S. Cyril of Jerusalem shows that Mary is both the rod of Aaron and of Jesse;§ as do also many other Fathers.

"Blossoming rod of Aaron.|| For truly thou wert the rod, and thy Son the flower; since from the root of David and Solomon budded forth Christ, our Creator, Almighty God and Lord, the alone Most High. Of Him who is God and Man art thou Mother, Virgin before birth, Virgin in birth, and Virgin after birth."¶

S. Hippolytus brings forward the prophecy of Jacob** and compares it with this passage of Isaias saying:—

"The prophet called a lion's whelp Him who of Juda and David was made according to the flesh—not, indeed, made of David's seed,†† but conceived of the Holy Ghost, and come forth of a holy germ from the earth. And this Isaias thus expresses: *There shall come forth a rod out of the root of Jesse, and from it a flower shall rise up.* That which Isaias speaks of as a flower, Jacob called a shoot. For first it put forth buds, and then it flowered in the world."‡‡

"Behold the Lord will ascend upon a swift cloud, and will enter into Egypt, and the idols of Egypt shall be moved at His presence, and the heart of Egypt shall melt in the midst thereof."—xix. 1.

"Many of the Fathers," writes Fr. Morris, "understood the *light cloud* here spoken of as a symbolic name for the Blessed

* *Cant.* ii. 1.

† *Dan.* ii. 34, 35, 44, 45. S. Jerome on this place, says that a certain Hebrew interpreted to him the prophet's words as referring to the birth of Christ at Bethlehem.

‡ S. Jerome, *Ep.* xxii. 19, *ad Eustoch.*

§ *Catech.* xii. 27. See Hesych. *in Leviticum*, Lib. v., Patr. Gr. Tom. 98, p. 1097.

|| *Numbers* xvii. 8.

¶ S. Ephrem, *Threni B. M. V.*, Opp. Gr. et Lat. Tom. iii., p. 575.

** *Gen.* xlix. 8-12.

†† But S. Paul says that *He was made of the Seed of David according to the flesh* (*Rom.* i. 3); that is, inasmuch as He received His assumed human nature from David by the Virgin Mary: but He was not made of the seed of David, if regard be had to the way of His conception, *viz.*, by no seed of earthly father.

‡‡ S. Hippolytus, *Demonstrat. de Christo et Antichristo* SS. viii., Galland T. ii., p. 420. See also S. Justin M., *Apol.* ii. 32. *Tryph.* 86, 87; Tertullian, *De carn. Christi.* 21; Novatian, *De Trin.* c. 9; Methodius, *De Sim. et Anna* 10; Lactantius, *Div. Inst.* L. iv. c. 13; S. Ambrose, *De benedict. patriarch.* c. iv. 19; S. Augustine, *Serm. de Symb. ad Catech.* iv. n. 4; Chrysippus, *Orat. de Virg. laud.*; Hesychius, *De Virg. laud.*; S. Maximus, *Hom. V. de Pasch*; Theodoret, *Commentar. in Is.* xi.; S. Leo M. Serm. iv. *In Dom. Nativ.*; S. Gregory the Great, *Comment. in* 1 *Reg.* c. 1, and *supra*, p. 104.

Virgin. Thus S. Ephrem referring evidently to a well-known opinion:—

"'This is taken also of Our Lord, who when He appeared as Man in the world was carried as if on a light cloud, upon the arms of the Virgin into Egypt.'*

"And again:—

"'The cloud on which the Lord rode is a type of the Mother of God, the Virgin Mary.'†

"Now supposing a number of passages of this kind occurred, the meaning of the former part of the verse would show how the latter part was to be understood, *viz.*, that the idols fell then and there, when and where Our Lady took Our Blessed Saviour. This would be a fair inference, even if nothing of a more definite kind occurred, and there were no tradition asserting the fact which Isaias prophesied to have taken place. But the words of S. Ephrem, before those last quoted, will show the existence of such a tradition:—

"'He shall break the statues of the house of the Sun, and shall burn the houses of the Egyptian gods with fire. This Bethshamesh is that which is called Heliopolis in Egypt; in which the worship of gods was exceedingly rife, and also that of helpless idols. And in it were huge statues as high as a pomegranate. . . . Of these it is written, that the Lord broke them. However, it was not that He actually broke the idols and cast them down, but it was the worship of devils and idols, which the Lord Christ, when He appeared as man in the world, overthrew and destroyed and confounded. And this is what Isaiah especially signifies when he says, Behold, the Lord rides upon a light cloud, and enters Egypt, and shaken are the Egyptians' idols before Him.'‡

"Now this passage, one not commonly cited, agrees with the general tradition to that effect. Athanasius in his youth composed a treatise in defence of the Incarnation against the heathen, and after citing some passages from the prophets, and this among them, to observe upon, he says:—

"'Which of the holy prophets or ancient patriarchs died upon the cross for the salvation of all? Or who was wounded and taken away for the health of all? Which of the great or the kings came down to Egypt, so that by that descent Egypt's idols fell? Abraham went thither, but idolatry prevailed over all again. Moses was born there, yet for all that the religion of those in error kept there still.'§

* *S. Ephr. in loc.* † *In Jer.* xliv.

‡ Vol. ii., p. 145. The minute description of the idols here omitted gives colour to a tradition that the Saint had been in Egypt: which is worth noticing here, as he may have learnt this tradition from Athanasius possibly.

§ *De Incarn.* 36.

"This great doctor plainly regards the proof of the fulfilment of the prophecy alluded to to be as clear as that of the others. Eusebius and Cyril of Jerusalem mention a similar tradition.* The same seems to be alluded to by S. Austin.† But the Latin Fathers generally understand it of the destruction of idols, by the coming of Christ into the world, of which Egypt is the type.‡ Yet this does not gainsay the belief in a more particular and immediate influence upon the idolatry of Egypt. Nor does it seem likely that Our Lord should have singled out that country without some special and immediate object, or that persons of such sanctity as Our Lady and S. Joseph should have exercised no influence upon the people amongst whom they lived.§ Yet it is possible that the place in which they sojourned may have been long after Christ's Ascension regarded by Him with favourable eyes for His parents' sake, and that the wonderful doctors of the Trinity and Incarnation, Athanasius and Cyril, may have owed their lights and graces to her, who looked from heaven upon the country which had afforded a refuge in trouble, with eyes of affectionate recollection: for the whole race of Saints is full of natural affection.|| And as it is commonly believed that the Saints of the desert owed their existence to this visit, why should not Egypt's doctors also be indebted to it? Nay, who can say that Mary's intercession in consequence of that visit did not obtain for S. Eulogius the inspiration to pray for the conversion of England?"¶

"Now that pillar of cloud went indeed visibly before the children of Israel, but mystically it signified the Lord Jesus who was to come on a light cloud, as said Isaias, that is, in the Virgin Mary, who was a *cloud* according to her descent from Eve, but *light* on account of her virginal integrity. She was light since she sought not to please man but the Lord. She was light since she had not conceived in iniquity, but was a mother by the coming down of the Spirit, and had not brought forth in sin but with grace. In a cloud came He whom the nebula of His body cast in shade; but light was that flesh which no sins of His own weighed down. For how should He be weighted with sins of His own who took away the sins of all peoples?"**

* Ap. Tromb. iv., p. 21.

† *De Civ. Dei*, viii. 23.

‡ See Corn. a Lap.

§ See the passage from S. Chrysostom, cited *infra.*, P. ii. § 4 of this chapter.

|| S. Chrys. *in Rom.*, p. 120, Savile.

¶ *Jesus the Son of Mary*, vol. ii., p. 15 sq. S. Gregory ascribed the conversion of England to the prayers of his friend S. Eulogius, the holy and learned patriarch of Alexandria. S. Greg. M. *Ep.* 8—Morris, vol. i., p. 250.

** S. Ambrose, *In Ps.* cxviii., *Serm.* v. 3, 4

"The Lord cometh into Egypt upon a light cloud. See what he says. The Lord cometh: the Lord and Saviour into this Egypt in which we are: into the place of darkness where Pharao is, the Lord cometh. He comes not except on a light cloud. What then is this light cloud? As it seems to me, it is holy Mary weighted with no human seed. This light cloud comes into the world, and bears with it the world's Creator. And what is said in Isaias? *The Lord cometh into Egypt on a light cloud: and the idols of Egypt shall be broken in pieces.* The Lord came, and the idols of Egypt were set in commotion, violently shaken, and destroyed. This cloud destroyed the Serapim in Alexandria; it was no emperor, no mortal man, but this cloud which came into Egypt." *

"*Behold the Lord will ascend upon a light cloud, and will enter into Egypt.* O the riches of Mary's virginity (Marianæ virginitatis)! As the boiling pot † so did she glow with fervour, and as a cloud she rained the grace of Christ on the lands. For of her was it written: *Behold the Lord comes sitting on a light cloud.* ‡ Light, verily, was she who knew not the burdens of wedlock, light in truth, she who lightened this world of the heavy debt of sins. Light was she who bore in her womb the remission of sins. For she it was that lightened John whilst yet in his mother's womb, who leapt at her voice, and, as an infant, exulted with joy, animated first with the sense of devotion, before being infused with the breath of life.

"Take then, O holy virgins, take of the spiritual rain of this cloud, therewith to cool all sensual ardour, and to bedew your inmost soul. The rain of this cloud our fathers announced would be the world's salvation. This rain they foretold would come down as those *showers falling gently upon the earth,* § which Jerobaal asked for and merited to obtain. ‖ Follow this good cloud, which generated within itself the Fountain wherewith it watered the whole world. Receive, then, of the *free rain* (voluntariam pluviam), ¶ the rain of benediction, which the Lord poured forth upon His inheritance. Take of this water, and let it not flow past you; because it is a cloud, let it saturate and steep you in its holy moisture: because it is a boiling pot, let its fervour perfume you with the Eternal Spirit (quia olla est, spiritu vaporet æterno)." **

"The prophet here foretells that the Lord would come into Egypt, that is, to this afflicted world, on the Virgin. He called Mary a cloud, because she was of flesh; and light, because she was a Virgin, not weighted with the burdens of marriage. She is also the rod that blossomed into flower, †† because she was pure, and her virginity directed with a free heart to God, and she was not turned aside by distraction of worldly cares. Therefore it was that the Lord from the Cross gave her to S. John His most beloved disciple, ‡‡ who had *said to his father and to his mother: I do not know you,* §§ and when called by Christ, left his own father to follow the Word. ‖‖ To such a one is the Virgin given, who knows not his own; to such a one is the Virgin given, who drinks in wisdom from the breast of Christ; to such a one is the Virgin given, who

* *Breviarium in Psalterium,* in *Ps.* xcvi. 2, Int. Opp. S. Hieron.
† *Ps.* lix. 10.
‡ See above on *Ps.* lxxvii. 14.
§ *Ps.* lxxi. 6.
‖ *Jud.* vi. 36 sq.
¶ *Ps.* lxvii. 10.
** S. Ambrose, *De Inst. Virg.* cap. xiii. 81, 82.
†† *Numb.* xvii. 8.
‡‡ *John* xix. 27.
§§ *Deut.* xxxiii. 9.
‖‖ *Matt.* iv. 21.

recognises not his brethren, and knows not his children. And therefore does the Law bless him: *Give to Levi his trusty ones: give to Levi his lots.**

"Hence too it was he received the Lord's Mother. For we find it written that from that hour the disciple *took her to his own.*† But what means it, *to his own*, for he had left his father and mother, and followed Christ? And how *to his own*, when the Apostles had themselves said: *Behold we have left all things, and have followed Thee?*‡ What of *his own* had John, who had no earthly or worldly things, who moreover was not of the world? What things then had he *his own*, but those which he had received from Christ? A good possessor of the word and of wisdom was he, a good recipient of grace. . . . Nor, for that matter, would the Mother of the Lord Jesus betake herself save to a possessor of grace, with whom Christ had His dwelling.

"Do you then, my children, give yourselves also to that true Levi, the Prince of priests, the true Aaron, the true Melchisedech, to be His trusty ones. Be yourselves also clouds, but light ones. And this you will really be, if virginity lighten the burdens of your condition, and illumine the darkness of this flesh of clay. Hence says she, *I am black, and beautiful, O daughters of Jerusalem*,§ black by reason of the flesh, beautiful through virginity. . . . Give yourselves to Him; show forth in yourselves that Adam who was before sin, that Eve as she was before she drank of the serpent's slimy venom; before they were supplanted by his snares, and when they had not whereof to be ashamed. . . ." ||

"Mary was that light cloud which bore our Lord into Egypt." ¶

"He shall grow up as a tender plant (virgultum) before Him, and as a root out of a thirsty (sitienti) ground."—liii. 2.

"He poured forth dew and living rain upon Mary, *the thirsty earth.*" **

"Symmachus, says S. Jerome, interprets the Hebrew word here, instead of *virgultum*, *ramus* a branch, in order to show the humanity assumed by the Divine Word which came forth from the Virgin's womb, whereof he says: *Sicut radix de terra sitienti.* Aquila instead of *sitienti*, gives *invia*, *i.e.*, pathless, or without way, untrodden, to denote the privilege of virginity, and that He was created, not by any human generation, but as though from unsown virgin soil; of whom too the prophet said before, *There shall come forth a rod*," etc. (Ch. xi. 1); "to signify His birth and rising in the world." ††

"I will give to them in My house and within My walls a place and a name better than sons and daughters. I will give them an everlasting name, and they shall not fail."—lvi. 5.

"God promises to others that they shall not fail; and will He suffer His Mother to fail? But Mary does not fail: the teacher (magistra, mistress) of virginity hath not failed," etc. ‡‡

* *Deut.* xxxiii. 8.
† *John* xix. 29.
‡ *Matt.* xix. 27.
§ *Cant.* i. 4.
|| S. Ambrose, *Exhortatio Virginitatis*, cap. v. 31-33, vi. 34-36.
¶ Procopius Gazæus, *Comment. in Isai.*, Tom. 87, p. 2144.
** S. Ephrem, *Comment. in loc.*, Lamy, vol. ii. p. 145, *and Hymn* ii. 13, *on the Epiphany*, *Ibid.*
†† S. Jerome, *Comment. in Is. Proph.*, Lib. xiv., in loc.
‡‡ S. Ambrose, *De Inst. Virg.*, cap. vi. 45.

". . . If holy conversation alone and good works and fasts, without virginity, might merit the coming of the Holy Ghost to her, Anna the daughter of Phanuel of the tribe of Aser, so renowned for her chastity, and always giving herself to prayers and fastings in God's Temple, might have been the Mother of the Lord. Then again it is said: *The Virgin the daughter of Sion hath despised thee.** Her whom the prophet had spoken of as daughter, he also called a virgin: lest if he had only named a daughter, thou mightest suppose her also married. She is the virgin daughter to whom is elsewhere said: *Rejoice, thou barren, that bearest not: break forth and cry, thou that travailest not; for many are the children of the desolate, more than of her that hath a husband.*† She it is of whom God speaks by Jeremias saying: *Will a bride forget her ornament, or a virgin her pectoral band?* ‡ Concerning her in the same Prophecy is a great miracle, *viz.*, that *a woman should compass a man,*§ and the womb of a virgin enclose the Parent of the universe." ||

JEREMIAS.

"And I went down into the potter's house, and behold he was doing a work on the wheel. And the vessel was broken which he was making of clay with his hands: and turning he made another vessel, as it seemed good in his eyes to make it."—xviii. 3, 4.

"And thus, when renovating things which were from the beginning, and forming them again of the Virgin by the Spirit, He fashions the same (*i.e.*, the first man, Adam) anew. Just as at the beginning, when the earth was yet virgin and untilled, God, taking mould, formed therefrom, without any sowing, the living creature perfectly endowed with reason. And here I may adduce the prophet Jeremias as a trustworthy and lucid witness, who speaks thus: *And I went down into the potter's house, and behold he was doing a work on the wheel. And the vessel was broken which he was making of clay with his hands: and turning he made another vessel, as it seemed good in his eyes to make it.* For when Adam, having been fashioned out of clay, was still soft and moist, and not yet, like a tile, made hard and incorruptible, sin ruined him, flowing and dropping down upon him like water. And therefore God, moistening him afresh, and forming anew the same clay to His honour, having first hardened and fixed it in the Virgin's womb, and united it and mixed it with the Word, brought it forth into life, no longer soft and broken." ¶

"A woman shall compass a man."—xxxi. 22.

"O woman blessed above women, who both knew not man, and compassed a man in thy womb. . . . Mary compassed a man by giving faith to the Angel, whereas Eve lost a man by consenting to the serpent." **

* *Is.* xxxvii. 32.
† *Is.* liv. 1, *Gal.* iv. 27.
‡ *Jer.* ii. 32.
§ *Jer.* xxxi. 22.
|| S. Jerome, *Advers. Jovinian.*, Lib. i. 32.
¶ S. Methodius, *Convic. Dec. Virg.* cap. iv. et v. Patr. Gr. Tom. 18, p. 67.
** Serm. 119, *In Nat. Dom.* iii. 3. Int. Opp. S. August. In Append.

EZECHIEL.

"And he brought me back to the way of the gate of the outward sanctuary, which looked toward the east; and it was shut. And the Lord said to me: This gate shall be shut, it shall not be opened, and no man shall pass through it: because the Lord the God of Israel hath entered in by it, and it shall be shut for the prince. The prince himself shall sit in it to eat bread before the Lord: he shall enter in by the way of the porch of the gate, and shall go out by the same way."—xliv. 1-3.

"The prophet Ezechiel says that he saw the building of a city upon a very high mountain. * The city had many gates. Of these one is described as shut. What is this gate but Mary? And shut, because a Virgin. Mary then is the gate through which Christ came into this world, when He was shed forth by virginal birth, without loosing the bars of virginity. The enclosure of purity remained unscathed, and the seals of integrity were kept inviolate, as He went forth from the Virgin, whose sublimity is such that the world is unable to sustain it. *This gate*, it is said, *shall be shut, it shall not be opened.* A good gate is Mary, that was closed, and was not opened. By her Christ passed, but opened not. Now if we can show that every one has a gate, whereby Christ enters, as it is written: *Lift up your gates, O ye princes, and be ye lifted up, O eternal gates, and the King of glory shall enter in,* † how much more is there a gate in Mary, in whom Christ sat, and from whom He went forth. For there is also the gate of the womb: whereof says holy Job, *Let the stars of that night be darkened, because it shut not up the doors of my mother's womb.* ‡ There is then a gate of the womb, but not always shut. One alone could remain shut, through which with purity intact the Virgin's Offspring passed. . . . This gate looked towards the East, since it shed forth the true Light, gave birth to the Orient, and brought forth the Sun of Justice. . . .

"A closed gate is virginity: an inclosed garden virginity, and a sealed fountain § virginity. . . . An inclosed garden thou art, O virgin. Keep thy fruits. Let not thorns rise upon thee, but let thy grapes flourish. . . . A paradise art thou, virgin: beware of Eve. A sealed fountain art thou, virgin. Let no one pollute thy waters, no one trouble them; that so thou mayest behold thine own image in thy fountain. A closed gate art thou, virgin. Let no one open thy gate, which once for all the Holy and True hath shut, *He who holds the key of David, who opens and no one shuts; who shuts and no one opens.*" ||

"Keep, then, with thee this fire in thy breast to quicken thee again to life; lest the cold of everlasting death creep over thee. That young man, [*i.e.*, Jesus Christ] cast Himself down, even He who came by Mary; and He was wont to infuse the heat of life into the breasts of His hearers. . . . ¶ The King of Israel Himself passed through this gate, the Prince in person sat therein, when *the Word was made flesh, and dwelt in us.*** As King was He

* *Ezech.* xl. 2.
† *Ps.* xxiii. 7.
‡ *Job* iii. 9, 10.
§ *Cant.* iv. 12.
|| *Apoc.* iii. 7.
¶ *Luke* xxiv. 32.
** *John* i. 14.

sitting in the regal court of the virginal womb, or in the boiling pot, as it is written: *Moab is the court of hope* (aula spei), or *the pot of my hope* (olla spei mea): * for both readings are found in different Codices. This regal court is the Virgin; for she is not subject to man, but to God. The pot too is the womb of Mary; for she has filled the whole world with the fervid Spirit, who came upon her when she brought forth the Saviour." †

S. Ambrose, in a sermon on Christmas Day, cited by John Cassian, whom his friend Leo, afterwards Pope, had employed to confute Nestorianism in the West, says again:—

"Behold the miracle of Our Lord's Mother. She conceived, a Virgin; she brought forth, a Virgin. A Virgin was she when she conceived, a Virgin when pregnant, a Virgin after childbirth: as it is said in Ezechiel: *And the gate was shut, and it was not opened, for the Lord passed through it.*" ‡

"S. Gregory Nyssen," writes Fr. J. Brande Morris, "in his Texts against Jews, § avails himself of this text to prove the miraculous birth of Our Saviour. This would show that it was a very common interpretation in the Greek Church, though we happen to have no Greek commentators upon Ezechiel left except Theodoret: who says in his commentary that, 'it is likely that in this passage the womb of the Virgin also is hinted at, through which no one ever entered or went out, except the Lord Himself.' This is a strong admission from a person of Nestorian bias, as all of the Nestorian party hated anything in the shape of allegory, as the Adoptionists did afterwards."

"I see the miracles, and proclaim the Godhead. I see the sufferings and deny not the Manhood. But Emmanuel would have opened the gates of nature as man, but the bars of virginity as God He burst not through. But so He came forth from the womb, as He entered in through the hearing. So was He born as He was conceived. Impassibly He entered, incorruptibly He came forth according to the prophet Ezechiel, who said: *The Lord turned me to the way of the outer gate of the sanctuary, which looked towards the east, and it was shut. And the Lord said to me, This gate shall be shut, it shall not be opened, and no one shall pass through it, but the Lord God of Israel alone. He shall enter in and come forth. And the gate shall be shut.* Behold a clear demonstration of Mary, the Holy Mother of God. Silenced therefore be all contradictions. And let us be enlightened with the knowledge of the Scriptures, that we may obtain the kingdom of heaven for ever and ever. Amen."

"By this closed gate is signified the virginal womb of Mary, who, ever a

* *Ps.* lxix. 10.

† S. Ambrose, *De Inst. Virg.*, cap. vii. 52-56, viii., xi., xii., 79. See also *Epist.* xcii. 6, S. Jerome, *Comment. in Ezech.* c. xliv. S. Ephrem too speaks in the same sense.

‡ Cassian, *De Incarnat.*, L. vii., p. 12, 92.

§ Cap. iii., p. 303, Zacagni.

S. Proclus, ap. Mercat. ii., p. 24. This sermon was preached before the assembled Bishops at Ephesus.

perfect Virgin brought forth the Saviour. For Christ the Lord alone, as saith Bishop Augustine of blessed memory, brought out, through the inviolate virginal entrails of His Mother, the limbs of an infant, even as after the Resurrection, through closed doors, He brought in the limbs of a young man." *

OSEE.

"And I will espouse thee to Me in faith."—ii. 20.

"What are the nuptial pledges of the Virgin, the holy spouse? *And I will espouse thee to Me in faith.* Elizabeth too, speaking of Mary says: *Blessed is she who believed*," etc.†

JOEL.

"It shall come to pass in that day, that . . . a fountain shall come forth from the house of the Lord, and shall water the torrent of thorns."—iii. 18.

"In Mary the prophecies of the just and of all the prophets had their fulfilment. . . . Mary may most fitly be called by divers names. Thus she is the Temple of the Son of God. . . . She is that new mystical Heaven,‡ wherein the King of kings dwelt as in His abode, from whence He came down to earth. . . . She is the Vine that is fruitful of fragrant sweetness.§ . . . She is the Fountain that is come forth from the House of God." ||

HABACUC.

"And the Holy One from Mount Pharan."—iii. 3.

"This spiritual mountain signifies to us the holy Virgin in whom God dwelt, and out of whom He was cut without hands, that is, without marriage, according to Daniel's vision of the stone that was cut out of the mountain without hands." ¶

ZACHARIAS.

"Behold a candlestick all of gold," etc.—iv. 2, 3.

"Who then is this candlestick? The holy Mary. Because she bore the immaterial light, God Incarnate. Why all golden? Because she remained Virgin after the Birth. . . ."

S. Ephrem goes on to apply the Eastern gate that was always to be kept shut,** to Mary, and then continues:—

"And as the candlestick is not of itself the cause of light, but is that which bears the light, so too the Virgin is not of herself God, but the temple of God." ††

* Julianus Pomerius, *De Promiss. et Prædictionib. Dei*, P. ii. c. 36; Int. Opp. Prosper. Aquet.

† S. Cyril of Jerusalem, *Cat.* xii. 26. Patr. Gr. Tom. 33, p. 760.

‡ *Apoc.* xxi. 1. § *Ecclus.* xxiv. 23.

|| S. Ephrem, *Serm. de laud. Dei. Gen. Mariæ*, i. See above in *Cant.* iv. 2, S. Jerome, *Epist.* 48, n. 21.

¶ *Dan.* ii. 45, S. Ephrem, *Comment. in Habac.*, ap. Lamy, vol. ii., p. 271.

** *Ezech.* xliv. 1-3.

†† *Orat.* ii. *De Incarnat. Domini.*

SCRIPTURAL EXEGESIS.

PART II. THE NEW TESTAMENT.

§ 1. The Annunciation and Incarnation.

S. CHRYSOSTOM.

"The book of the generation of Jesus Christ the son of David; the son of Abraham."—*Matt.* i. 1-7.

"Think not that thou hearest small things in hearing of this generation. But lift up thy soul, be straightway astonished and shudder, at hearing that God has come upon earth. For so wondrous and unlooked for was this, that thereat the angels gathered together in their choirs, offered praise and glory in behalf of the world for the same; and already were the prophets of old in amazement that God was to be born on earth and converse with men.* For astounding exceedingly is it to hear that God, ineffably inexpressible, incomprehensible, co-equal with the Father, should come by a virginal womb, deign to be born of a woman, and take for forefathers David and Abraham. But why speak of David and Abraham? What is indeed far more astounding—those sinful women of whom we have just now made mention. Hearing these things, raise up thy soul, and have thought of nothing mean and low; but marvel exceedingly at this, that being the Son of God, without beginning, even His own very Son, He endured to be called the Son of David, in order that He might make thee the son of God, and condescended to have a slave for His father, that He might make the Lord of all a Father to thee the slave. Seest thou at once from the beginning what the Gospels are? But if thou doubtest of what concerns thyself, learn then to believe it from what concerns Him. For it were much more hard, according to human reason, that God should become man, than that man should be called the son of God. When, then, thou hearest that the Son of God is Son of David, and of Abraham, no longer doubt that even thou too, a son of Adam, will be son of God. For not in vain and to no purpose did He humble Himself so low, but that He intended to lift us up. . . ."†

In answer to the question, Why the genealogy of Joseph, and not of Mary is recorded in the Gospels, S. Chrysostom,—after the reason he had given in his Second Homily—goes on thus to

* *Baruch* iii. 38.

† *In Matt.* Hom. ii. 2.

expose in his Third Homily another reason, which, he says, is more mystical and hidden:—

"What is it? you ask. It is because God was unwilling it should be known, even at the time of the Nativity, that Christ was born of a Virgin. Be not however troubled at so unexpected an answer. For what I say is, of a truth, not my word, but that of our fathers, men admirable and renowned. For if Christ at the beginning spoke much that was obscure, calling Himself the Son of Man, and did not on all occasions clearly reveal His equality with the Father, why dost thou marvel if He put this truth too (of His Mother's virginity) in the background, thereby making use of a great and wonderful economy? But thou wilt say, What is it precisely that is wonderful here? I answer, the conduct of Divine Providence, thus to save the Virgin, and to free her from all evil suspicions. Since, had the Jews heard of this from the first, they would have put a malicious construction on the Virgin Mother, and stoned her, condemning her as an adulteress. For if even on other occasions, of which they had like examples in the Old Testament, their conduct was so outrageous; if, for instance, when Our Lord cast out devils, they called Him a demoniac; and because He wrought cures on the Sabbath —though the Sabbath had been often broken before—they charged Him with being an enemy of God, what would they not have said had it come to their ears that His Mother was a Virgin? Since here they had on their side all past history, wherein nothing at all like was ever known. Again, if after all His many miracles they still called Him the son of Joseph, how before these miracles would they ever have believed Him to be the son of a Virgin? For this reason, then, was the genealogy of Joseph drawn out, and he espoused the Virgin. Now, if even Joseph, a man so just and admirable, needed many arguments to bring himself to accept what took place; for example, the assurance of the angel, the vision during sleep, and the testimony of the prophets, how would the Jews, who were perverse and corrupt, and so hostile to Our Lord, have entertained such a notion? For anything so strange and novel would certainly have been made only fresh matter of difficulty and scandal, since nothing of the kind had ever happened in the time of their forefathers. But if any one believed once for all that Jesus Christ was the Son of God, he would have no further ground for doubt about this other matter; whereas, if he held Him to be only an impostor and an enemy of God, would he not, at hearing of His being born of a Virgin be all the more scandalised rather than induced to believe in its truth?

"For the same reason the Apostles also do not speak of it straightway at the beginning; whereas we find them discoursing much and often about the Resurrection; since of this there were examples in past times, though, indeed, they were dissimilar. But they are uniformly silent as to His being born of a Virgin, and not even did His Mother herself venture to utter it. For observe what the Virgin says even to Himself: *Behold I and Thy father have been seeking Thee.* Since had there been any suspicion here, He would not have been held to be really even the Son of David; and were this not held, many other further evil consequences would have arisen. For like cause too, even the angels do not affirm it, save to Mary alone, and to Joseph; and when proclaiming the glad tidings of what had happened, they refrain altogether from adding it." *

* S. Chrysostom, *In Matt.*, Hom. iii.

"Now the generation of Christ was in this wise," etc.—*Matt.* i. 18.

"Let us therefore, beloved, attend to the Scriptures; and if nothing else, let us at any rate studiously take in hand the Gospels. For on opening the book you will at once see there the name of Christ: *Now the generation of Christ was in this wise. When His Mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost.* Now he who hears these things will straightway set his heart on virginity, be in marvel of admiration at the childbirth, and retire from the world. Nor is it, indeed, little for you to see the Virgin deemed worthy of the Spirit, and an angel conversing with her. Yet these things are but on the surface. For if you follow on steadily to the end, you will forthwith spurn all things of this life, and deride all things here below. And if you are rich, you will make no account of riches, when you hear that she who was wife of a carpenter, and from a humble home, became Mother of your Lord. If you are poor, you will not be ashamed of your poverty, when you learn that the Creator of the universe was not ashamed of the most mean abode. Meditating on these things, you will not rob, nor be covetous, nor take to yourselves what belongs to others; but will rather be lovers of poverty and despise riches. And thus you will banish all evils. Again when you see Him lying in the manger, you will no longer be eager to hang round your little son's neck an ornament of gold, nor to have made for your wife a bed with silver fixings. Thus casting aside such cares, you will no more do acts that come from them of covetousness and robbery. Many other gains too may thence be derived, whereof it is impossible now to speak particularly. But those will know who make the trial. Wherefore I exhort you to procure the Sacred Scriptures, and with the Scriptures to get hold of their thoughts, and have them engraved in your minds. The Jews, because they did not pay attention to them, were commanded to fasten sacred Scriptures to their hands. We however keep them not on our hands, but at home, in order to imprint them in due season on our hearts. By thus purging out the present life we shall obtain the good things to come; to which may we all attain through the grace and loving kindness of Our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom and with whom be glory to the Father, together with the Holy Ghost, now and ever, and world without end. Amen." *

"Let whoever is poor take comfort, Joseph and Mary, the Lord's own Mother had no servant, nor handmaid. From Galilee, from Nazareth, they came alone; they had no beast of burden. Themselves they are both lords and servants. A strange thing: they enter the inn, not the city. Since timid poverty ventured not to approach the rich." †

"Most appropriately does the Evangelist use the words, *She was found with child*, a mode of expression customary for things marvellous that come to pass beyond all hope and expectation. Go no further, nor seek for more than what is written, nor ask, how the Holy Ghost wrought this in the Virgin. For if it is impossible to explain the process of natural formation, how shall we be able to explain the action of the wonder-working Spirit? To prevent thee, then, from embarrassing the Evangelist and troubling him with unop-

* *In Joan.* Hom. 54, Tom. 8, p. 296.
† *Hom. de Nativ. Dom.* ex Luc. Tom. 2.

portune questions, he relieves himself from all this by declaring the Author of the prodigy." *

"Who having heard was troubled at his saying," etc.—*Luke* i. 29.

"Truly admirable was the Virgin: and Luke shows forth her virtue, saying that when she heard the salutation, instead of allowing herself to be carried away, or falling into a rapture,† and at once receiving what was said, *she was troubled, seeking what manner of salutation it might be.*" ‡

"Behold, a virgin shall be with child," etc. "And Joseph rising up from sleep, did as the Angel of the Lord had commanded him, and took unto him his wife. And he knew her not till she had brought forth her first-born Son."—*Matt.* i. 23-25.

"As an artist when he has found some very serviceable material, fashions it into a most beautiful vessel, so Christ on finding the holy body and soul of the Virgin, constructed for Himself a living (ἐμψύχον) temple, and formed, in the way He willed, man in the Virgin, and having clothed Himself therewith, came forth to-day. . . .

"But what do I say, or how shall I speak? For the marvel astounds me. The Ancient of days has become an infant. He who is seated on His high and lofty throne is laid in a manger. The impalpable, simple, incomposite, and incorporeal, is swayed about in human hands. He who bursts asunder the chains of sin is folded in swathing-bands; since thus He wills it. For He wills to make dishonour, honour; to clothe the inglorious with glory, and to show forth the very limit of contumely as the measure of virtue. Hence He bears with my body, that I may have room for His Word; and taking my flesh He gives me His own Spirit, that by this giving and taking He may bestow on me the treasure of life. He takes my flesh that He may sanctify me, He gives me His Spirit that He may save me. But what say I, or what shall I speak? *Behold, a Virgin shall conceive.*§ No longer is it now spoken of as something to be done, but it is marvelled at as already done. It was done amongst the Jews, amongst whom too it was spoken; but it is believed amongst us, amongst whom it was not even mentioned. *Behold, a Virgin shall conceive.* The letter is that of the synagogue, but the possession of the Church. The one found the parchments, the other discovered the pearl; the one dyed the wool, the other is clad in the robe of purple. . . .

"It became the Dispenser of Sanctity to come forth by pure and holy childbirth. For it is He who of old formed Adam from virgin earth, but from Adam formed woman without woman. And as Adam produced woman without woman, so also to-day did the Virgin bring forth man without man. . . . For this cause was He made flesh, that whom heaven cannot contain, the manger might hold. Therefore is He laid in the manger, that He by whom all infants are nourished, might Himself receive nourishment from a Virgin Mother. Therefore did the Father of the world to come hang upon

* *Id. In Matt.* Hom. iv. n. 3.

† οὐκ εὐθέως ἑαυτὴν ἐξέχεεν, she did not straightway pour herself out.

‡ *Ib.* n. 4.

§ *Is.* vii. 14.

the breast, and not refuse the virginal arms that thus He might be easily accessible to the Magi. . . .

"Because the devil deceived Eve of old, therefore to Mary who was a Virgin did Gabriel bring the happy news. Eve being deceived brought forth the word that caused death; but Mary on receiving the blessed tidings gave birth to the Word made flesh who gained for us eternal life. The speech of Eve showed the tree, whereby she banished Adam from paradise. But the Word that came forth from the Virgin showed the Cross, whereby she brought the thief in Adam's stead to paradise." *

ORIGEN.

"When as His Mother Mary was espoused to Joseph."—*Matt.* i. 18.

"Why is He conceived not of a simple Virgin," asks S. Jerome, "but of one espoused? First, that by means of the genealogy of Joseph might be shown the origin of Mary. Secondly, lest she should be stoned by the Jews as an adulteress. Thirdly, that in her flight to Egypt, she might have the solace of a husband. Ignatius, the Martyr, added also a fourth reason, why He was conceived of one espoused; that His birth, he says, might be concealed from the devil, by his supposing Him to be the offspring not of a virgin, but of a wife, and, therefore that He was not the true Messiah foretold by the Prophets."

It seems, however, that S. Jerome here does not quote directly from S. Ignatius, but from Origen; for we cannot find any such express statement in the writings of that Saint, though it may, in some sense, be gathered from his Epistle to the Ephesians. †

The following is the passage of Origen:—

"Hence it is admirably said, as I have found in the Epistle of a certain martyr, I mean Ignatius, the second bishop of Antioch after Peter, who, in the persecution, fought with beasts at Rome. The virginity of Mary was hidden from the prince of this world. It was hidden by reason of Joseph. It was hidden by reason of the nuptials. It was hidden, because she was supposed to have a husband. For, if she had not had a spouse, and, as was supposed, a husband, it could not, by any means, have been concealed from the prince of this world. For, at once, the devil's silent thought would have stealthily crept along: How is she, who has not known man, pregnant? This conception must be divine, it must be something more sublime than human nature. Our Saviour, on the other hand, had so disposed, that the

* *Hom. in Natal. Christi diem.* This Homily though ranked amongst the *Opera dubia* of S. Chrysostom is, says Montfaucon, *most certainly* of that holy doctor's age, since S. Cyril in his book, *Ad Reginas*, which is also found amongst the Acts of the Council of Ephesus, quoted from it, and among other passages, much of what we have here cited.

† His words are: "Now the virginity of Mary was hidden from the prince of this world, as was also her offspring, and the death of the Lord; three mysteries of renown (*κραύγης*, shout), which were wrought in silence and have been revealed to us."—c. xix.

devil should not know His dispensation, and His taking to Himself a body,* and hence even, in His generation, He concealed it; and afterwards charged His disciples not to make Him known. And when He was being tempted by the devil himself, He at no time confessed that He was the Son of God, but only answered: 'It is not right that I should adore thee, or that I should make these stones bread, or that I should cast myself down from on high.'† And, in thus speaking, He always refrained from saying that He was the Son of God. Look, too, in another Scripture, and thou wilt find that it was Christ's will, that the devil should not know the coming of the Son of God. For the Apostle, when affirming that the powers of wickedness were ignorant of His Passion, says: *We speak wisdom among the perfect. But not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world who come to nought; but we speak the wisdom of God hidden in mystery, which none of the princes of this world knew. For, if they had known it, they would never have crucified the Lord of Glory.*‡ Hence the mystery of the Saviour was hidden from the princes of this world. . . . So much as to why Mary had a spouse." §

"Now since the Angel saluted Mary in new language, such as I have not been able to find elsewhere in Scripture, some few words must be said on this. For in saying, *Hail, full of grace*—in Greek κεχαριτωμένη ||—there is what I nowhere else remember to have read in the Scriptures. For to no one else is speech such as this addressed, *Hail, full of grace.* For Mary alone is this salvation reserved. For if Mary had known that to any one else a like address had been made—since she had knowledge of the Law, was holy, and knew the predictions of the Prophets from daily meditation—the salutation would never have caused her to fear, as being strange. Therefore it was that the Angel said to her, *Fear not Mary, for thou hast found grace before God. Behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and shalt bring forth a Son, and shalt call His name Jesus. He shall be great and shall be called the Son of the Most High.*" ¶

"I think it accords with reason, that of that cleanliness which consists in chastity, the first-fruits of men was Jesus, and of women, Mary. For it is not seemly (ἔοφημον) that any other but she should be enrolled (ἐπιγραψάσθαι) as the first-fruits of virginity." **

"*When as His Mother Mary was espoused to Joseph*, etc. Whose, is this *His?* Of the Only-begotten God she is Mother, of the Lord and King of all, of the Maker and Creator of all things. Of Him who on high is without mother, on earth without father. Of Him who in heaven, according to His Godhead, is in the bosom of the Father, and on earth, according to His assumption of a body, is in the bosom of His Mother. O grace of great

* See S. Ambrose, *Expos. Ev. sec. Luc.*, Lib. ii. 2, 3.

† *Matt.* iv. 3-10.

‡ 1 *Cor.* ii. 6-8.

§ *In Luc. Hom.* vi., *S. Hieron. Translatio.*

|| "The Protestant rendering *Highly favoured* would naturally lead the uninstructed to assume that some high favour was *then* given, whereas the Greek implies past action. The Coptic, Syriac, and some other versions agree with the Latin in the rendering, *Full of grace*, because they had no word which would exactly express the Greek, and so they rendered it by a periphrasis." Morris, *Jesus the Son of Mary*, vol. i., p. 347.

¶ *Ib.* ** *In Matt.* x. 17, Patr. Gr. Tom. 13, p. 878.

admiration! O inexpressible sweetness! O unspeakable and mighty Sacrament!"*

"Joseph son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife."—*Matt.* i. 20.

"Take her as a heavenly treasure given to thee to guard, even as the riches of the Deity, as the fulness of sanctity, as perfect justice. Take her and keep her, as the abode of the Only-begotten, as His venerable temple, as the house of God, as the property of the Creator of all things, as the immaculate home of the heavenly King and Spouse. . . . For the Only-begotten Son of the Father has been engendered of the Virgin, that He might once more renovate and raise up that former virgin Eve who had fallen; and that He might make children of God by the adoption of grace, those who had by perverse will become children of the devil. . . . *Behold, a Virgin shall receive in her womb.* Hear that the Virgin will receive offspring in her womb not from the fathers' concupiscence, since she was neither deceived by persuasion of the serpent, nor infected by his venomous influences. The Virgin shall receive in her womb that she may give birth to God, who in His mercy will become incarnate for the salvation of the world, for the binding of the strong armed one, for the treading under foot of the head of the impious serpent, and the trampling down all his strength. She will bring forth a Son to repair Adam once more, to set aside Eve's disobedience by the obedience of Mary, to raise up the race of those who lie prostrate, which had been cast down of old by the woman's rash credulity. . . .

"Christ needs no father on earth, for He owns an incorruptible Father in heaven. He needs no mother in heaven, since He owns a pure and stainless Mother on earth—even the most Blessed Virgin Mary."†

S. GREGORY THAUMATURGUS.

"In the sixth month, the Angel Gabriel was sent from God to a Virgin," etc.—*Luke* i. 26, 27.

"The tenor of his message was as follows. I am moved by My compassion to descend to earth in order to recover the lost Adam. Sin made him to decay who was made to My image, and hath corrupted the work of My hands, and obscured the beauty which I formed. . . . Go therefore to the Virgin Mary. Pass thou on to the animate city whereof the prophet spake these words: *Glorious things are said of thee, O city of God.*‡ Go, then, to My rational paradise, to the Gate of the East, to the place of sojourn that is worthy of My Word, that hath appeared as a heaven upon earth; go to the light cloud, and announce to it the shower of My coming; go to the sanctuary prepared for Me, to the hall of the Incarnation, to the pure chamber of My generation according to the flesh. Speak in the ears of My rational ark, so as to prepare for Me the accesses of hearing. But disturb not nor vex the soul of Mary. Manifest thyself in such wise as becomes that sanctuary, and

* Hom. i., *Decem in diversos Matthæi et Joannis locos.* Int. Opp. Origenis.
† *Ib.* ‡ *Ps.* lxxxvi. 3.

salute her first with the voice of gladness. Address Mary with the salutation, *Hail, full of grace*, that I may show compassion for Eve in her depravation.

"Thereupon the Angel set himself to carry out the commission given him by God and repaired to the Virgin, and addressed her with a loud voice saying, *Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with thee.* No longer shall the devil be against thee: for where of old that adversary inflicted the wound, there now first of all does the Physician apply the salve of deliverance. Where death came forth, there has life now prepared its entrance. By a woman came the flood of our ills, and by a woman also our blessings have their spring.

"Thou hast heard, O purest one, things whereof even the choir of inspired men was never deemed worthy. . . . Thou alone, O purest Virgin, art now made the recipient of things of which all these were kept in ignorance. . . . Appropriately therefore, did the Angel say to the holy Virgin Mary first of all: *Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with thee;* inasmuch as with her was laid up the full treasure of grace. For of all generations she alone hath arisen a Virgin pure in body and in spirit; and she alone bears Him who bears all in His Word. Nor is it only the beauty of this holy one in body that calls forth our admiration, but also the innate virtue of her soul. . . . *Hail, thou that art gifted with grace.* . . . *He Himself is with thee*, who is the Lord of sanctification, the Father of purity, the Author of incorruption, the bestower of liberty, the curator of salvation, the steward and provider of true peace, He who out of virgin earth made man, and out of man's side then formed Eve. Even *the Lord is with thee*, and is besides also of thee.

"Come, then, beloved brethren, let us, too, take up the angelic strain and to the utmost of our power return the due meed of praise, saying, *Hail, thou that art full of grace, the Lord is with thee.* For thine it is truly to rejoice, seeing that the grace of God, as well He knows, has chosen to dwell with thee—the Lord of glory dwelling with His handmaid; He that is fairer than the children of men, with the fair one; He who sanctifies all things, with the undefiled; God is with thee, and with thee also is the perfect Man in whom dwells the whole fulness of the Godhead. *Hail, thou that art full of grace*, the fountain of that Light which enlightens all who believe in Him! *Hail, thou that art full of grace*, the rising of the rational Sun,* and the undefiled flower of life! *Hail, full of grace*, the mead (λειμών) of sweet savour! *Hail, full of grace*, the ever-blooming vine, that makes glad the souls of those who honour thee! *Hail, full of grace*, the soil that all-untilled bears bounteous fruit . . . by reason that God the Word from above took His abode in thee, and formed from thee the new Adam in thy holy womb . . . the pure, and chaste, and undefiled, and holy Virgin Mary. . . .

"*And having heard, she was troubled at his saying.* . . . Yet being herself a pure, immaculate and stainless image (ἄγαλμα), she shrank not in terror from the angelic apparition, as did most of the prophets. . . . But as one who is clad in a brilliant robe deems it of great moment that no impurity or filth be suffered to touch it anywhere, so did the holy Mary consider with herself. . . . Will this word *Hail* prove a trouble to me, as of old the fair promise of being made like to God which was given her by the serpent devil, proved to our first mother Eve? Has the devil, who is the author of all evil, become transformed again into an angel of light? . . .

* Others, of the Sun of Justice.

"*And the Angel said to her: Fear not, Mary, for thou hast found grace with God.* . . . Through me all the heavenly powers hail thee, the holy Virgin: yea rather, He Himself, who is the Lord of all the heavenly powers and of all creation, hath chosen and preferred thee as the holy one and altogether fair; that from thy holy, chaste, pure, and spotless womb the enlightening Pearl may come forth for the salvation of the whole world: since of all the race of man thou art by birth the holy one, the one more honourable, more pure, and more pious than any other; and a soul thou hast whiter than the snow, and a body purer than any gold, howsoever fine; and a womb such as was the object of Ezechiel's vision, which he speaks of as *the likeness of the firmament, as the appearance of crystal terrible to behold; the likeness of a throne; as the appearance of the sapphire-stone, and upon the likeness of the throne, was a likeness as of the appearance of a Man above upon it. And I saw, as it were, the resemblance of amber, as the appearance of fire within it round about: from his loins and upward, and from his loins downward, I saw as it were the resemblance of fire shining round about. As the appearance of the rainbow when it is in a cloud on a rainy day; this was the appearance of the brightness round about.**

"And with what words of laudation then, shall we tell forth her virgin dignity, her stainless form? With what spiritual canticles or speech shall we honour her who is most glorious among the angels? She is planted in the house of God like a fruitful olive † that the Holy Ghost overshadowed; and by her means are we called sons and heirs of the kingdom of Christ. She is the ever-blooming paradise of incorruptibility, wherein is planted the tree that giveth life,‡ and that bringeth forth, for all, the fruits of immortality. She is the boast and glory of virgins, and the exultation of mothers. She is the sure support of the faithful, and the succour (or example, κατόρθωμα) of the devout. She is the vesture of light, and the home of virtue (or truth). She is the monument of justice and sanctity: and all who become lovers of her, and set their affections on virgin-like ingenuousness, shall enjoy the grace of angels.

"For since the holy Virgin, in the life of the flesh, was in possession of the incorruptible citizenship, and walked as such in all manner of virtues, and lived a life more excellent than man's common standard; therefore the Word, who cometh from God the Father, thought it meet to assume flesh and endue Himself therewith as perfect Man from her, that by the self-same flesh, wherein sin had entered into the world, and death by sin, sin might be condemned in the flesh, and that the tempter to sin might be overcome in the burying of the holy body, and that therewith also the beginning of the resurrection might be shown forth, and life eternal instituted in the world, and fellowship established for men with God the Father. . . .

"*Hail, then, thou that art full of grace!* for through thee joy is decreed for the whole creation, and the human race receives again through thee its pristine dignity. . . .

"And the holy Mother of God *kept these words and pondered them in her heart*, as one who was the receptacle of all the mysteries.

"Thy praise, O most holy Virgin, surpasses all laudation, by reason of the God who took flesh and was born of thee. To thee every creature, of things in heaven, and things on earth, and things under the earth, offers the

* *Ezech.* i. 22, 26-28. † *Ps.* li. 10. ‡ *Apoc.* ii. 7.

meet offering of honour. For thou hast been indeed shown forth to be the true cherubic throne. Thou shinest as the very brightness of light in the high places of the kingdoms of intelligence, where the Father, who is without beginning, and whose power thou hadst overshadowing thee, is glorified; where also the Son is adored, whom thou didst bear according to the flesh; and where the Holy Ghost is praised, who effected in thy womb the generation of the Mighty King. Through thee, O thou full of grace, is the Holy and Consubstantial Trinity known in the world. Together with thyself deem us also worthy to be made partakers of thy perfect grace in Jesus Christ Our Lord: with whom, and with the Holy Ghost, be glory to the Father, now and ever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen." *

FIRMICUS MATERNUS.

"Why God, that is, the Son of God condescended to become Man, we will with brevity and truth show. When God made the first man, Adam, to His likeness, He gave him the sure law of His commandments. He, being deceived, through the woman Eve, by the persuasions of the devil, lost the dignity of the glory that was promised him. There was in paradise a tree, through which he lost the grace of the rewards promised by God. Man was made from clay of virgin earth: for not yet, as says the Scripture, had it rained upon the earth. Despising God's commands he afflicted the human race with the snares of mortality. It was fitting, then, that all this should be reformed and corrected; and the reformation must needs reform the original beginnings. Adam, made from slime of virgin earth, had lost by his prevarication the promised life. Christ, born by the Virgin Mary and the Holy Ghost, recovered both immortality and kingdom. The tree of wood afforded pestilent food to those deceived, but the wood of the Cross restored life by an imperishable compact. Adam contemned, Christ obeyed, God. Thus by a divine disposition all that Adam had lost, Christ regained. For after space of long time, in the last times, in almost the last week of the ages, the Word of God united Himself to a human body, that He might set man free, conquer death, and join the weakness of a human body to divine immortality . . . and so the Virgin Mary, descending from Abraham, conceived God, that the offspring of aforesaid men might be knit together by a bond of immortal fellowship, and thus the human race, conjoined by means of One who was Man and at the same time God, might by a perfect and adequate communion attain to the kingdom of immortality through the merit of obedience." †

S. ZENO.

"God, the Son of God, at the time appointed, concealing for the while His majesty, comes forth from His ethereal throne, and prepares for Himself a tabernacle in the temple of the predestined Virgin; wherein He hides Himself, about to become man; and there whilst preserving what He was, He meditates to be what He was not. Mingled thus with human flesh He forms Himself an infant. The womb of Mary swells forth with pride, not by

* *Homilies*, i., ii., iii. *On the Annunciation*, Int. Opp. S. Greg. Thaum. Learned critics attribute them to the fifth century.

† *De errore profanarum religionum*, cap. 25, Patr. Lat. Tom. 12, p. 1037.

conjugal gift, but by faith ; by the Word, not by seed. She knows not the tediousness of the ten months,* since she has conceived within herself the world's Creator; she gives birth not in sorrow, but in joy. O prodigy! Exultingly she brings forth (exponit) an Infant more ancient than all nature. Withal, a mother for the first time, she utters no groans at her childbirth. The new-born Infant on coming into the world, does not, as is naturally the wont, enter upon weary life with anticipatory tears. His Mother does not lie exhausted through the weight of so great a childbirth, grown pale, her bowels all weakened. The Son is not defiled by any uncleanness of His Mother, or His own ; for in truth nought could there be unclean about Him, who had come to cleanse from filth and stains, that is, the sins of the human race. His Mother needed not those things that are customary for mothers after childbirth ; nor could she need them, she who had merited to receive into her womb as her Son, the Saviour of all souls. . . .

"According as God had promised by the prophets that He would send His Son as a meet Saviour for the human race in fulness of time, laying aside meanwhile the dignity of His Divinity, but not of His power, He came forth from heaven, and entered, a chaste guest, into the sanctuary of the virginal temple, and then carried out what it was His will to be. Yea in hidden manner He assumed that which of old He had appointed to be accomplished. With glad will He reposes in that all-flowering home of chastity, and prepares for Himself in the womb of the holy Virgin a body wherein He will be born at His own will. Fashioned into a man, God is inclosed in the covering of flesh, and borrows a human life from time, He who bestows eternity on times. O prodigy! Mary conceives of Him whom she brings forth : her womb swells with majesty, not from seed : and the Virgin holds Him, whom the world and the fulness of the world cannot contain. Meanwhile limbs add growth to their Maker, and the work clothes the Workman with its shape. Mary brings forth not in sorrow but joy. The Son is born without father, not indeed all the Mother's, but owing it to Himself that He has been conceived, and born. The Mother is astounded most of all that to her lot has fallen such a Son whom she would not believe to be born of her, were it not that as she was an incorrupt Virgin after conception, such she remained also after the birth.

"Oh, the new order of things! Constrained by love for His image to become an Infant, God cries ; and suffers Himself to be bound in swathing-bands, He who was come to loose the debts of the whole world. He is laid in the manger of the stable, to show that He is the Shepherd and Food of the peoples. He subjects Himself to successive steps of age, He whose eternity admits not age." †

"Him, whom the heavens contain not, the bosom of a single woman bore. Our Ruler did she rule. Him, in Whom we are, she carried. To our Bread she gave suck." ‡

TITUS BOSTRENSIS.

"And Mary said to the Angel : How shall this be done, because I know not man," etc.—*Luke* i. 34-38.

* "Matri longa decem tulerat fastidia menses." Virg. *Æn.* iv. 61.

† Lib. ii., *Tractatus* viii. et ix., Pat. Lat. Tom. 11, pp. 413-417.

‡ *In Natal.* iv., ap. Morris, p. 28 f.

"*How shall this be done, because I know not man?* Mary the most holy Virgin and Mother of God asks this question, not as though she were incredulous, but as one wise and prudent who desires to learn the way and manner of what was declared. For neither had anything of the kind happened before that a virgin should conceive, nor would ever be again. And hence the Angel takes the question in good part, and explains the manner as follows: *The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee.* Now Christ is the power of God as the Apostle teaches.* The way indeed whereby will come upon thee He who is to come, thou wilt not see: but He will operate, though He does not Himself appear. *And the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee;* that is, shall on all sides surround thee, shall clothe thee, shall fence thee around, shall embrace thee. We should observe here, how on naming the Holy Ghost, and the Power, and the Most High, he sets plainly before the Virgin the whole Most Holy Trinity. . . .

"*Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it done to me according to thy word.* This prayer of the most holy Virgin is in effect: Lo, I am but a tablet, ready indeed to receive writing, let then the Scribe write on me whatsoever seemeth good to Him, may the Lord of all do with me whatever He will." †

S. EPIPHANIUS.

"And the Virgin's name was Mary."—*Luke* i. 27.

"From the root of Jesse sprung king David, and from the family of king David the holy Virgin: holy, I say, and daughter of holy men. Her parents were Joachim and Anne, who pleased God in their life, and bore like fruit, even the holy Virgin Mary, at once the temple and Mother of God. These three, moreover, Joachim, Anne, and Mary, offered to the Trinity a sacrifice of praise. For Joachim is interpreted *the preparation of the Lord*, since from him it was that the temple of the Lord was prepared, namely, the Virgin. Anne is interpreted *grace*, because Joachim and Anne received grace, after having prayed, to bear such fruit, by obtaining the holy Virgin. For whilst Joachim prayed on the mountain, Anne prayed in her garden. Anne then conceived, and gave birth to a heaven and throne of cherubim, the holy child Mary.‡ For she will be found to be a heaven, a temple, and a throne, since we are wont to interpret Mary, *Lady* and also *hope*. For she gave birth to the Lord, who is the Hope of the whole world, that is, Christ. Again, this name of Mary is interpreted *the myrrh of the sea*, and by myrrh may be understood immortality, since she brought forth an immortal gem in the sea, that is, in this world. Moreover, to the sea, meaning the whole world, the Virgin brought serenity and calm, by giving birth to Christ, who is a haven of rest. The blessed name of the glorious Virgin Mary is also interpreted, *she who is full of light*, since she was illumined by the Son of God, and has enlightened all even to the ends of the earth who believe in the Trinity. . . ." §

* 1 *Cor.* i. 24.

† *Hom. in Deip. Annunt.* Patr. Gr. Tom. 85, pp. 1779-83.

‡ "As soon then as Mary was grown into a little girl, and no longer needed her mother's breast, holy Anne, taking her to the temple restored her to God." S. Gregory of Nyssa, *Orat. in Nat. D.N.J.C.*

§ *Orat. De laudib. S. M. Deip.* Int. Opera S. Epiphanii.

"Who in any generation ever dared to utter the name of holy Mary, and did not at once, without being asked, add the title of Virgin? . . . How then do they dare to attack that spotless Virgin, who merited to be the dwelling of the Son—she who was chosen for this out of the tens of thousands of Israel, that she might be made a worthy vessel and dwelling-place for a unique prodigy of childbirth?" *

"And Joseph . . . knew her not till she brought forth her first-born Son."—*Matt.* i. 25.

"Mary, therefore, *brought forth her Son, the First-born*, not what was the first-born of her, as though she were to bear another. *And he* (Joseph) *knew her not.*† For how did he know that a woman should receive so great grace? Aye, how, verily, should he know that a Virgin would be glorified with such-like glory? He knew, indeed, that she was woman by formation, and of the female sex by nature, and from the womb of Anne, and from a father, Joachim; that she was too cousin of Elisabeth, and of the house and lineage of David. But he knew not that with such-like glory any one on earth should be honoured, least of all a woman. He knew her not, in truth, until he saw the wonder. He knew not the marvel, until what time he saw that which was borne of her. But when she brought forth, he knew both the honour of God bestowed upon her, that she it was who had heard, *Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with thee.*" ‡

S. PROCLUS.

"Joseph knew not that the Prophet like to Moses was to be born of a Virgin inviolate. He did not bear in mind that the temple of God she might be made, who had been formed of pure mould. He was ignorant that the Second Adam was to be fashioned by the all-pure hands of God from a once-more virginal paradise." §

S. AMBROSE.

"A Virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph."—*Luke* i. 27.

"Why was Mary espoused before she was with child? Perhaps it was, lest it should be said that she had conceived by adultery. . . . The Lord preferred that some should have doubts as to His own origin, rather than they should doubt of His Mother's chastity. . . . There is nothing that need disturb us in what the Evangelist Matthew says: *He knew her not till she brought forth her first-born Son.* For this is either merely an idiom which we find in other places of Scripture, as for example: *Even until you grow old, I am*; ¶ where we are not to suppose that after their old age God would cease to be. And again, in the Psalm, *The Lord said to my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thy enemies thy footstool*; ** where there is no thought that after that event He should no longer thus sit. Or, it is so expressed, because, when any one is treating of some particular matter, he considers it sufficient

* *Hær.* 78, 6. Patr. Gr. Tom. 42, p. 708.
‡ *Hær.* 78, 17. Patr. Gr. Tom. 42, p. 728.
|| *Matt.* i. 25.
† *Matt.* i. 25.
§ Hom. vi. *Laudat. Deip.* v. 8.
¶ *Is.* xlvi. 4.
** *Ps.* cix. 1.

to speak to the point without redundancy, and unnecessary to go outside what he has in hand, by entering upon what is merely incidental. Hence the Evangelist, whose object was to show that the Mystery of the Incarnation was incorrupt and pure, deemed it inopportune to dwell more at length on the proof of Mary's virginity, lest he should be credited with being rather the Virgin's advocate, than the assertor of the mystery. At all events, by teaching us, as he does, that Joseph was a just man, he sufficiently indicates how impossible it was for Joseph to violate that temple of the Holy Ghost, and womb of mystery—the Lord's Mother. . . ."

"And the Angel being come in, said, Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with thee: Blessed art thou among women. But when she saw him she was troubled at his entrance."—*vv.* 28, 29.

"Learn the Virgin here by her conduct, learn the Virgin by her modesty, learn the Virgin by the divine oracle, learn her by the mystery. . . . She is alone in the inner chamber, to be out of sight of man, so that only an angel may find her. She is alone without companion, alone without witness. That she may not meet with any less noble accosting, she is saluted by an angel. Learn, O virgin, to shun much freedom of speech, since Mary was in fear at even an angel's salutation." *

"I am never less alone, than when I seem to be alone. . . . Mary was alone, and she was speaking with the Angel. She was alone when *the Holy Ghost came upon her, and the power of the Most High overshadowed her.* She was alone, and she wrought the world's salvation, and conceived the redemption of all." †

"Think how great was Mary, and yet she was found nowhere else when sought for but in her chamber. Let her teach thee what thou shouldst follow. She saw the Angel in the form of a man, was fearful in heart, and shunned his look. And hence it was that the Angel said to her, *Fear not, Mary.*" ‡

"She thought with herself what manner of salutation this might be."—*v.* 29.

"And this with reverent modesty, because she feared; with prudence, because she marvelled at the new style of benediction, such as nowhere else is read of, nowhere before found. For Mary alone was this salutation reserved. And well is she alone called *Full of grace*, since she alone obtained the grace, which no other woman had merited, to be filled with the Author of grace. . . ."

"And Mary said to the Angel: How shall this be done, because I know not man?"—*v.* 34.

"Here, unless thou payest diligent attention, it might seem as though Mary did not believe. And, indeed, it would not be right for her, who was

* *Exposit. in Luc.* in loc.

† *Epist.* 49 (*ad Sabinum*), P. L. Tom. 16, p. 1203.

‡ *Exhort. Virg.*, cap. xii. 71. "The Angel found Mary, not wandering abroad, but alone by herself, engaged in contemplation. And because she sought not favour with the world, she found grace with God." S. Chrysost., ap. Ludolph. de Sax. P. i. c. 5.

chosen to give birth to the Only-begotten Son of God, to seem to have been incredulous. Or how could it be . . . that, whereas Zachary was made dumb in punishment for his unbelief, Mary—supposing she believed not—should be exalted by the coming down upon her of the Holy Ghost? But whilst, on the one hand, Mary was bound not to disbelieve, yet, on the other hand, she might not rashly assume to herself—I mean, she was bound not to disbelieve the Angel, and at the same time not rashly to assume to herself things divine. Now it was no easy thing to know *the mystery that was hidden from the ages in God*, which not even the higher Powers were able to know.* Still she refused not faith, she rejected not the ministry proposed to her; but gave the compliance of her affection, and pledged her submission. For in saying: *How shall this be done?* she doubted not of the effect, but only inquired as to the mode of that effect. How much more temperate is this reply of hers, than are the words of the priest. She says, *How shall this be done?* He answered, *Whereby shall I know this?* Whilst she is already treating as of a matter now in hand, he is still doubting about the message. In saying that he does not know, he implies that he does not believe, and wants some other authority for faith: Mary expresses herself as already on the way to act, and as having no doubt but that will be done, whereof she inquires as to how it may be done: for this is implied in her words: *How shall this be done, because I know not man?* The incredible and unheard-of manner of becoming a mother must be first heard in order to be believed. That a virgin should give birth is sign of no human, but of divine mystery, as, indeed, had been foretold by Isaias, *Take to thee a sign: Behold a Virgin shall conceive, and bear a son.*† Mary had read this, consequently she believed it would be done: but how, she had not read; for the manner of its accomplishment had not been revealed even to so great a prophet. The mystery of so great a mandate was, in truth, one not to be uttered by any man's but by an angel's tongue. And to-day it is heard for the first time: *The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee.* It is both heard and believed. Mary at length says:—

"Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it done to me according to thy word."—*v.* 36.

"See here Mary's humility: see her devotion. She calls herself the Lord's handmaid, she who is chosen to be His Mother, and is not elated by the unexpected promise. Moreover, in calling herself handmaid, she claims not for herself the privilege of so great a grace, but of doing only what she is bidden. For since she is to give birth to Him who is meek and humble, she herself also was bound to prefer humility. *Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it done to me according to thy word.* This betokens service, and in it you may see the fixed purpose of the will (*votum*). *Behold the handmaid of the Lord*, implies preparation for duty (*apparatus officii*). *Be it done to me according to thy word* shows the resolute purpose formed in the will. How promptly too did Mary believe, with regard to a conception so unequal to her own condition! For what so unequal as the Holy Ghost and body? What so unheard of, as for a virgin to be with child, in opposition to all law

* *Eph.* iii. 3-5, 8-11, *Col.* i. 26, 27.

† *Is.* vii. 14.

and experience, and even to modesty itself, the care of which is so dear to a virgin? For in the case of Zachary the matter of his unbelief was not any such inequality of condition, but his advanced age, etc. . . . It is evident, then, that Mary in saying, *How shall this be done, because I know not man?* had no doubt as to the fact, but inquired as to the manner of the fact. Indeed, it is plain she believed that it was to be done, from her asking how it should be done. And hence she merited to hear: *Blessed art thou that didst believe.* Yea, verily blessed was she, surpassing the priest as she did: for whereas the priest denied, the Virgin corrected the error. There is no marvel that the Lord, when about to redeem the world, began His work with Mary; so that she, by whom salvation was being prepared for all, might be the first to receive the fruit of salvation as a pledge.*

"Rightly, I repeat, did Mary inquire how it would be done; for, though she had read that a Virgin should bring forth—she had read, as I have said, *Behold a Virgin shall receive in her womb*†—yet how she should receive, the Angel is the first to announce in the Gospel." ‡

"*The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, etc.*§ Without doubt the Holy Ghost also is to be adored, since He is adored, who was born according to the flesh, of the Holy Ghost. But let no one grant this to the Virgin Mary. Mary was the temple of God, not the God of the temple. He alone therefore is to be adored, who was operating in the temple." ||

S. JEROME.

"Whereupon Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not willing publicly to expose her, was minded to put her away privately."—*Matt.* i. 19.

". . . It was a prescription of the Law, that not only the guilty, but those also privy to crimes, were guilty of sin. How then could Joseph if he concealed his wife's crime, be described as a just man? But here precisely is Mary's testimony; *viz.*, that Joseph knowing her chastity; and in wonder at (admirans) what had taken place, conceals in silence that, the mystery of which he knows not." ¶

Luke i. 26-29.

"Let her (Læta's daughter) imitate Mary, whom Gabriel found alone in her cell. And this was perhaps why she was troubled with fear, because she saw there what appeared to be a man, a sight to which she was unaccustomed. Let her strive to resemble her of whom it is written: *All the glory of the daughter of the King is from within.*** May she too, wounded with the dart of charity, be able to say to her Beloved: *The King hath brought me into His chamber.*†† May she never wander abroad; lest they that go about the city strike and wound her, and strip her of the delicate mantle of modesty, and

* *Ex pignore* is perhaps more correctly rendered: from her Pledge, *i.e.*, her Child.

† *Is.* vii. 14. ‡ *Expos. in Luc.* in loc. § *Luke* i. 35.

|| *De Spiritu Sancto*, Lib. iii. cap. xi. 79, 80.

¶ *Commentar. in Matt.* in loc. ** *Ps.* xliv. 14.

†† *Cant.* i. 3; ii. 4.

leave her naked in blood. But rather should any one knock at her door, let her say: *I am a wall, and my breasts a tower. I have washed my feet, I cannot defile them.** . . . Restore this most precious jewel to Mary's cell, and place her where the little Jesus cries in the manger (cunis Jesu vagientis impone)." †

"What and how great was the blessed and glorious ever-Virgin Mary, is set forth from heaven by the Angel who said: *Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou amongst women.* For with such privileges it was befitting the Virgin should be dowered, that she might be full of grace, who gave glory to heaven, the Lord to earth—through whom also came our peace, the faith to the nations, an end to vices, order to life, discipline to morals. . . And well is she said to be *full;* because to others is bestowed grace in parts, but on Mary is poured at once the whole fulness of grace. . . . In truth *full;* because whilst we believe that grace was in the holy patriarchs and prophets, yet not in such fulness. But in Mary came the fulness of all grace that is in Christ, although in different manner. And therefore he says: *Blessed art thou amongst women:* that is, more blessed than all women. And thereby whatever much malediction was infused through Eve, was all taken away by Mary's blessing." ‡

S. AUGUSTINE.

"The Angel Gabriel was sent from God . . . to a Virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph of the house of David, and the Virgin's name was Mary."—*Luke* i. 26, 27.

"The sacerdotal line differed from the royal line which had its origin in one of David's sons, who, according to the custom, married a wife from the sacerdotal line. Hence Mary belonged to both tribes, and had her descent both in the royal and sacerdotal lines." §

"Christ was born of a Mother who—though she conceived in perfect purity, and ever remained inviolate, a Virgin conceiving, a Virgin giving birth, a Virgin at death—yet was espoused to a carpenter, and thus extinguished in herself all pride of noble birth." ||

"The Virgin was espoused, that Joseph might himself take care of the Infant, whether in going to Egypt, or returning thence." ¶

"All goods appertaining to marriage were found in that of Christ's parents, Joseph and Mary: offspring, fidelity, and sacrament. Offspring, in the person of the Lord Jesus: fidelity, because no adultery: sacrament, because no divorce." **

"It was through believing that the Blessed Mary conceived Christ, to whom also through believing she gave birth. . . . Mary, full of faith, and conceiving Christ in her mind before she did so in her womb, said, *Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it done to me according to thy word.*" ††

* *Cant.* viii. 10; v. 3.

† That is, Send her to the monastery at Bethlehem; where were her grandmother Paula, and her aunt Eustochium. *Epist.* cvii. 7, 13, *Ad Lætam.*

‡ Serm. *De Assumpt. B. M. V.* Int. Opp. S. Hieron.

§ *De divers. quæst.* 61, n. 2. || *De catechizandis rudibus*, n. 22.

¶ Ap. Morales, L. ii., Tr. 1.

** *De nuptiis et concupiscentia*, L. i. c. 11. †† *Serm.* 215.

"Zachary did not believe. How did he not believe? He asked of the Angel whereby he might know what he was promising him, since he was himself an old man and his wife advanced in years. And the Angel said to him, *Behold, thou shalt be dumb, and shalt not be able to speak until the day wherein these things shall come to pass, because thou hast not believed my words, which shall be fulfilled in their time.** The same Angel comes to announce to Mary that Christ would be born of her in flesh. And her words are very like, for she too asks the cause, saying to the Angel, *How shall this be done, because I know not man?* While Zachary said: *Whereby shall I know this? for I am an old man, and my wife is advanced in years.* . . . To the latter is said, Thou shalt be dumb, because thou believest not: whilst to the former the cause is explained, and no silence imposed. On her saying, *How shall this be done, because I know not man?* the Angel answers, *The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee.* Behold how shall be done what thou askest, behold how, though thou knowest not man, thou shalt bring forth. Behold how: because *the Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee.* Have no fear of the heat of concupiscence under the shadow of so great sanctity. Why is this? If we attend but to the words, either both believed, or both doubted. But whilst we can hear words, God can search into hearts also.

"We should understand, well-beloved, that Zachary, in saying, *Whereby shall I know this? for I am an old man, and my wife advanced in years*, spoke as one who had given up all hope, and not with a view to inquire; whereas Mary, on the contrary, in saying, *How shall this be done, because I know not man?* spoke to make inquiry, and not giving up hope. Whilst she asked the question, she doubted not the promise.

"O truly full of grace! For thus she was saluted by the Angel, *Ave, gratia plena.* Who can explain this grace? Who is sufficient to render thanks for this grace? Man is made, and by his free will man is lost; and made man is He found who made, lest he should be lost whom He made. The Word, in the beginning with God, by whom all things were made, is made flesh: *Verbum caro factum est, et habitavit in nobis.* The Word is made flesh; but flesh comes to the Word, the Word is not lost in flesh. O grace! That we should have this, how were we worthy?

"But see what holy Mary says herself, full of faith, full of grace, about to become Mother, ever to remain Virgin. What does she say amongst other things, of which to speak in particular would be over-much? What does she say? *He hath filled the hungry with good things, and the rich He hath sent empty away.*" †

"Give answer now, O Sacred Virgin: why triflest thou with the life of the world? The Angel waits for thy assent; this is why the messenger tarries. Already thou hast heard *how this shall be done*, since *the Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High overshadow thee*, that thou mayest bear offspring, and not lose virginity. Heaven's gate, shut of old by Adam, has already given sound; by it the Internuncio has gone forth. God is at the gate, He is waiting for the Angel whom thou art delaying. O Blessed Mary, the whole captive world implores thy assent: the world has made thee hostage

* *Luke* i. 20.

† *Serm.* 290, *In Nat. Joan. Bapt.* v. 4-6. See also *Serm.* 291, 5, 6; 293, 1.

to the Lord for its faith, through thee it supplicates that the iniquities of its parents be cleansed away. He who was offended has been the first to send, and has undone the bar which our sin had fastened against heaven. There is now an entrance for us, if thy assent be given. Thou succourest both us and thyself: for alike to us and to thee is the penalty entailed. In thy bridal chamber God has prepared the nuptials for His Son: in the joys of His espousals He has forgiven whatever offence the world had done Him. And so thou too, O Angel, messenger of so great a King, and legate of the divine secret—who from the palace of imperial majesty hast brought pardon to the guilty, life to the dead, and sacraments of peace to captives—urge on the Virgin who is not distrustful of God's bounty, but is thinking on the greatness of the bounty: do thou take the side of the world, knowing well, as thou dost, the secrets of heaven. Thy fellows will have joy, if thou furtherest the interests of the world. The sword of our transgression has cut us off from our fellowship: by means of you will our restoration be arranged. Do thou regard the squalid misery of our prison, and haste to say to Mary: How long, O Virgin, wilt thou delay the herald who may not tarry? Behold God who waits for me at heaven's vestibule: give the word of answer, and receive the Son; give faith, and experience the power: open thy roseate bosom, O Virgin perpetual: now is it that thy faith either opens, or closes heaven.

"*Behold*, she says, *the handmaid of the Lord*: let the King enter into His chamber: *be it done to me according to thy word*. Without delay the messenger returns, and Christ enters the nuptial couch. He receives the garment of flesh within the bridechamber of the Virgin, the little bag of flesh, within the treasure-house of Majesty. Man is espoused to Deity; flesh receives the prize. Christ goes forth as a bridegroom from His nuptial chamber: in presage of the nuptials, He went out to the field of the world: He ran as a giant exulting through the way: He arrived at length at the couch of the Cross, and there made the nuptials sure by ascending it; and there, as He perceived His creature gasping in sighs, by a communication of His loving compassion He gave Himself for atonement. He gave also a carbuncle, as jewel of His blood, and united to Himself her who should be for ever by right His wedded spouse. *I have joined you*, says the Apostle, *to one husband, to present you as a chaste virgin to Christ*.* Lo now, she who before was foul, is become beautiful; she who before was captive, is made free: Judæa, who had been free, is become a bond-woman, because she saw her Life hanging on the tree, and believed not in her Deliverer.

"Let us then rejoice, brethren, in this commerce of God and man, of the Bridegroom and the bride, of Christ and the Church, of the Saviour and the Virgin. Let us exult in faith, too, at the childbirth of the Virgin, who whilst she was espoused to a carpenter was wedded to heaven's Architect. . . ." †

"Mary is *the flower of the field*, from which has sprung that precious *Lily of the valleys*, by whose birth all nature is changed, and the guilt of our first parents is done away. In her has been cut off that record of Eve's unhappiness: *In sorrow shalt thou bring forth children*; since with joy she brought forth the Lord. For whilst Eve mourned, she exulted; and whereas Eve

* 2 *Cor.* xi. 2.

† *Serm.* 120 (alias de temp. 21), *In Natali Domini* iv. Int. Opp. S. Augustini, Appendix.

bore tears in her womb, Mary in hers bore gladness. The angel, sent by God the Father, came down from heaven, for the beginning of our redemption, to salute Mary as blessed; *Hail*, said the angel to her, *full of grace, the Lord is with thee*. Thus was Mary filled with grace, and Eve made void of guilt. Eve's malediction is changed into Mary's benediction. . . . The mother of our race brought punishment on the world: the Mother of our Lord brought the world salvation. Eve was fosterer of sin, Mary fosterer of merit. Through Eve we found death, through Mary life. The one wounded, the other healed us. Obedience is exchanged for disobedience, perfidy compensated by faith. With gladness therefore does Mary carry her Babe, with exultation embrace her Son, and bear Him by Whom she herself is borne. . . . O Blessed Mary the whole captive world implores thy assent. Tarry not, Virgin: say quickly thy word of answer to the Nuncio, and receive thy Son. Give faith, and feel the power. *Behold*, she says, *the handmaid of the Lord, be it done to me according to thy word*. At once, without delay, the Nuncio returns, and Christ enters into the virginal chamber." *

S. MAXIMUS.

"And she brought forth her first-born son," etc.—*Luke* ii. 7.

"Christ therefore is born the salvation of all, whom the prophets bear witness to as King of the nations. He is born of a Virgin, as Isaias declares saying, *Behold a Virgin shall conceive*, etc. The order of His birth proves the truth of the Lord. It is a pure and stainless Virgin who conceives. Her chaste womb, that pure members held, and an innocent body bore, was filled by the Holy Ghost. Behold the miracle of the Lord's Mother. Virgin she is in conceiving, Virgin in bringing forth, Virgin after childbirth. O glorious virginity, and illustrious fecundity! The Strength of the world is born, there is no groan of her who brings forth; the womb is empty when the Infant is taken, but virginity is not violated. For meet it was, that by giving birth to God the merit of chastity should grow greater, and that integrity should not be violated through the coming of Him, who had come to heal what was corrupted; nor chastity of body suffer injury through Him, by whom the virginity of baptism is bestowed upon the impure. The Child, then, now born is placed in the manger, and this is God's first cradle: nor does the Ruler of heaven spurn these straits, whose abode was a virginal womb." †

S. PETER CHRYSOLOGUS.

"When His Mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost."—*Matt.* i. 18.

"Why is it that the secret of heavenly innocence is destined for a spouse and not for a free woman? . . . No points, no letters, no syllables, not a single word, no names, no persons, in the Gospel are without divine meaning.

* Serm. 195, *De Annunt. Dominica* ii. Int. Opp. S. August. (probably by S. Fulgentius).

† *Hom.* v., Patr. Lat. Tom. 57, p. 235. This passage is continued in ch. iii., *infra*, on Mary's Sanctity.

A spouse is wanted, that, even then, Christ's spouse, the Church, may be signified according to the words of the prophet Osee: *I will espouse thee to Me in justice, and judgment, and in mercy, and in commiserations; and I will espouse thee to Me in faith.** Hence John says, *He that hath the bride is the bridegroom;* † and the blessed Paul, *I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.* ‡ Verily a spouse; who with virginal childbirth brings forth again the new infancy of Christ. . . .

"Mary is called a Mother. And when is Mary not a Mother? *The gathering together of the waters He called Seas* (Maria).§ Was it not she who conceived in her single womb the people going out from Egypt, that it might come forth a heavenly progeny re-born to a new creation, according to the words of the Apostle: *Our fathers were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea. And all in Moses were baptised, in the cloud, and in the sea.* || And that Mary might always lead the way in man's salvation, she, by her own right, with a canticle, went before that same people, whom the generating wave had given forth to light. *Mary*, it is written, *the sister of Aaron, taking a timbrel in her hand said: Let us sing to the Lord, for gloriously is He magnified.* ¶ This is a name germane to prophecy, salutary to those born again, the standard of virginity, the grace of modesty, the sign of chastity, God's sacrifice (hoc Dei sacrificium), the virtue of hospitality, the reunion (collegium) of sanctity. With reason then is this maternal name, that of Christ's Mother. We have said why the Mother is a bride, why Joseph is a spouse, why Mary has the maternal name, in order to show that all about the birth of Christ is mystical. . . ." **

May our vision be now sufficiently pure and keen to be able to view the brightness of the rising sun. For if our eyesight when most strong and perfect can hardly bear the early sun's ray, with what singleness of inward vision should we prepare so as to be able to support the splendour of our rising and radiant Creator?

"And in the sixth month the Angel Gabriel was sent from God into a city of Galilee called Nazareth to a Virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, and the Virgin's name was Mary," etc.—*Luke* i. 27-30.

The holy Evangelist marks the circumstances of place, time, and person, that the truth of the account may be evident by clear and detailed facts. *The Angel is sent to a Virgin espoused.* God sends to the Virgin a winged carrier, who in conveying grace, gives the marriage portion (dat arrham), and bears the dowry; that is, he brings faith, and delivers gifts of virtue, being about to arrange the pledging of virginal consent. With haste the angelic agent flies to the bride, to ward off from the spouse of God, and to suspend, any affection to human espousals. Not indeed to take away the Virgin from Joseph, but to restore her to Christ, to whom she was pledged in the womb, when first she was created (cum fieret). Thus Christ receives His own spouse, He carries not off another's; nor does He make separation, when He joins to Himself His own entire creature in one body.

* *Osee* ii. 19, 20.
† *John* ii. 29.
‡ 2 *Cor.* xi. 2.
§ *Gen.* i. 10.
|| 1 *Cor.* x. 1, 2.
¶ *Exod.* xv. 20, 21.
** *Serm.* 146, Patr. Lat. Tom. 52, p. 592.

"Let us now hear what the Angel did. *Entering in to her, he says: Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with thee.* In these words there is an offering, an offering of gift, not simply an act of salutation. *Ave, Hail.* That is, receive grace. Be not afraid; be not solicitous about nature. *Full of grace:* Because in others is grace; but on thee shall come at once the whole fulness of grace. *The Lord is with thee:* What is it, the Lord in thee? It is that He comes to thee, not with the intention of merely visiting thee, but He makes His descent in thee by a new mystery of being born of thee. Fitly did He add: *Blessed art thou amongst women:* because, wherein Eve inflicted punishment on her accursed bowels, therein Mary now joys, is honoured and accounted blessed. And truly is she now made Mother of the living by grace, who was mother of the dying by nature. . . .

"How great God is, he is indeed ignorant, who is not astounded at the Virgin's mind, who marvels not at her soul. Heaven quakes, angels tremble, creation bears it not, nature fails. One maiden alone thus takes God into the home of her bosom, receives, and gives Him pleasure by her hospitality, that —for earth, peace; for heaven, glory; for the lost, salvation; for the dead, life; for those on earth, family relationship with those in heaven, even the communion of God Himself with flesh—she may demand in very payment for the lodging, and obtain all this for the hire of her womb. *Behold, the inheritance of the Lord, children, recompense, the fruit of the womb. . . .*" *

"*Hail, full of grace.* This is the grace which gave glory to heaven, God to earth, faith to the nations, order to life, discipline to morals. This grace the Angel brought to Mary. The Virgin received it that she might restore salvation to the ages. *Hail, full of grace.* Because to others grace is bestowed in parts. But to Mary is given at once the fulness." †

"The Angel treats with Mary about man's salvation, because an angel had treated with Eve about his ruin. . . . *Fear not, Mary.* Before the process, the Virgin's dignity is announced by her name. For Mary in the Hebrew tongue, is in Latin called *Domina*, or Lady. The Angel therefore calls her Lady, that all trepidation of servitude may leave the Lord's Mother, to whom the high rank and authority of her Offspring has given the right to be Lady, both by her birth and title. *Fear not, Mary, for thou hast found grace.* True it is: because he who has found grace knows not fear. *Thou hast found grace.* With whom? *With God.* Blessed is she who alone amongst men merited above all others to hear: *Thou hast found grace.* How much? As much as he had before said: in fulness. And verily in fulness. Since with copious shower, it was to pour itself forth upon all creation. . . ." ‡

S. FULGENTIUS.

"Mary, though pregnant, joyed with healthful lightness: for the Light she bore within could have no weight. She became the window of heaven, because through her God shed true light o'er the ages. Mary became the heavenly ladder, because by her God came down to earth, that by her men might merit to ascend to heaven. For they may ascend thither, who believe that God descended to earth by the Virgin Mary. Mary has become the restoration of women, because through her it is that they are delivered from

* *Ps.* cxxvi. 3. † *Serm.* 140. ‡ *Serm.* 142.

the ruin of the primeval curse. . . . For Eve was cursed, but now we believe that through Mary she is gone back to the benediction of glory. Come then, ye virgins, to the Virgin, and rejoice; lay aside the curse of the transgression, and take to yourselves the benediction of reparation. Cast away the sorrows Eve had through the serpent, and take the honours Mary received through the Angel. Banish the sadness of her who conceives, drive away the groans of her who brings forth, that this Son of the Virgin may alone have dominion over you. Come, virgins, to the Virgin; come, ye who conceive, to her who conceives; come, you who bring forth, to her who brings forth: come, mothers, to a Mother; come, you who give suck, to her who gives suck; come, maidens, to a Maiden. For this cause it was that the Virgin Mary underwent in our Lord Jesus Christ all these stages of nature, that she might succour all women who have recourse to her, and thus the new Eve might repair every class of women that come to her by preserving virginity, just as the new Adam our Lord Jesus Christ had recovered every class of men, He who with the Father and the Holy Ghost liveth and reigneth God for ever and ever. Amen." *

S. ELEUTHERIUS TORNACENSIS.

"The Eternal Father, considering the ruin of the human race through the serpent's deceit, was pleased to liberate the world by the Incarnation of His Only-begotten Son; that as woman had been cast forth from the abodes of paradise through the suasion of the devil, she might through the Angel's salutation merit to receive the glory of immortality. The enemy's suasion deceived Eve, Gabriel's salutation comforted Mary. The Angel announces, in order that the devil's deceit may be destroyed: the Virgin is overshadowed by the power of the Most High, at the Angel's announcement, that woman, deceived of old by the messenger of Satan, may be restored. God incorruptible is clothed with flesh and comes down, that, by means of this Second Man, Jesus, the old man who on tasting the forbidden fruit found his way to misery and a valley of tears, may ascend on high. For we read that, when the woman had deceived her husband, it was said to her by the Lord: *In sorrow shalt thou bring forth children, and to thy husband shall be thy turning* (et ad virum conversio tua), *and he shall have dominion over thee.* These three disadvantages all those suffer who imitate not Mary's virginity. As though the Lord said to Eve: When thy turning shall be to thy husband, thou wilt be subjected to his servitude; when too thou shalt bring forth, thou wilt suffer the ills of sorrow and sadness. Now these three are excluded from the Virgin Mary's blessedness, and not only from the Virgin herself, but from all those who have vowed their virginity to Christ.† Come then virgins, you who make vow of virginity to the Virgin, vow the integrity of your body to the Virgin, who made the offering of inviolate chastity to the Lord. Hear how great was the merit of this same Virgin. For not only did she merit to be visited and addressed by the Angel, but to contain within the sanctuary of her virginal womb Him who can no way be contained. Our mother Eve was weighed down by three ills, but from these the blessed Mary is excluded, whilst she

* Serm. xxxvi., *De laudibus Mariæ ex partu Salvatoris.* Int. Opp. S. Fulgentii (Appendix), Tom. 65, p. 899.

† See S. Peter Chrysologus, *Serm.* 148, quoted *supra*, p. 72.

joys in a threefold happiness. For by the angelic salutation she is comforted, comforted, she is blest, and proclaimed to be fruitful with fulness of grace. For it is written: *The Angel was sent to a Virgin.* We confess that she is the Virgin of whom we read in Isaias: *There shall come forth a rod out of the root of Jesse*, that is, the Virgin Mary, *and a flower shall rise up out of his root,** that is, Christ. For He speaks of Himself in the Canticles: *I am the flower of the field.*†

"*And the angel being come in, said to her, Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb.* O angelic voice full of sweetness and joy! For in saying, *Hail, Mary*, he presented to the Virgin a heavenly salutation. Whilst in saying, *full of grace*, he showed that the sentence, by which our first parents became afar from God, was excluded, and the grace of benediction from on high restored, whereby, made free from slavery, they were brought again into paradise. And when he uttered the words, *Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb*, not only did he pronounce blessed the fruit of her womb, but that of all those also who following the Virgin Mary should persevere in virginity. O blessed Virgin, O Virgin chosen out from all others by the world's Creator! Him, who before all ages was begotten without mother by the Eternal Father, thou wilt conceive, made mother without co-operation of man. For here the ear was the wife, and the angelic word the husband. Virgin thou wilt conceive, and after childbirth virgin thou wilt remain. And the Son of God will descend into thee, that He who was to ascend with power of sublimity, and the glory of His brightness to the East, may turn the grace of His Majesty to the West. Let not the hearing confuse thee, nor the conception perturb thee. For this conception is no necessity, but the priceless power of God. He will be clothed with flesh, and will hide Himself in thy virginal womb, and the Son of God will begin to be the Son of Man, remaining always what He was. For we believe Him, unchangeable indeed; yet mercifully assuming what He was not, that in thee He may be contained whom the whole world is unable to sustain. By this conception thy virginal chastity will not be lessened, but rather the perfection of chastity will be increased in thee. Mother of the Creator hast thou become, whilst He Himself was with the Father; and when He was born of His Mother, He still remained with the Father. . . . Thou art made the heavenly ladder; the rod of Aaron, above all others hast thou flowered, that is, beyond all others art thou resplendent with noble virginity. Thou hast become the ladder whereby the glory of heaven has descended to these lower parts, that so humility may be borne aloft to the heights of heaven. . . . Let us therefore, most beloved brethren, beseech the Virgin to reconcile God to men, and cause concord between things of earth and heaven. May she intercede for the past, and supplicate her Son for the future. O Virgin, give not only corporal food, but the Bread of angels that is coming down into the sanctuary of thy womb; make us to fear the Son of God. *For the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.* . . . Hear therefore, and incline thine ear to our prayers, O Virgin who art deservedly praised by us. Thou who art venerated by us as remaining Virgin after childbirth, pray to God for us, that He will bestow constancy, grant patience: that concord may be strengthened, forbearance increased, so that when there shall come the anguish of mourning and misery, of calamity and sadness,

* *Is.* xi. 1. † *Cant.* ii. 1.

thou wilt deign to present us to thy Only-begotten Son, who is the One God, whom we confess as One in substance, Three in Persons. . . . Pray, that we may be made perfect light; that we may together praise thee in the glory of thy Son: to whom is honour, and power, through all ages of ages. Amen." *

"The Son, Eternal Light, came forth from Eternal Light: a lamp unfailing, He shone forth from that invisible brightness, when the Virgin Mary, the afore-announced Mother of the Judge Eternal, conceived of the Holy Ghost, and, remaining Virgin in chastity, brought forth the Son of God to earth; and after admirable childbirth, still continuing in virginity, nourished Christ Jesus with divine milk. O that holy angelic pronouncement! The Angel Gabriel is sent to the Virgin, who knows not the mystery. The Mother of the Redeemer is made like to a handmaid, as she gives answer to the Angel, saying, *Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it done to me according to thy word.* The Son of God, therefore, made Flesh, that the Angel's word might be fulfilled, is born of the glorious Virgin by divine inspiration; is laid in the manger, then is announced to shepherds by an angel. He rules all things reigning in heaven; and, a little one, the Son of God lies in the manger. He is nourished by the Virgin Mother, and by the Magi is adored with gifts. . . ." †

HESYCHIUS.

"When the Blessed Virgin heard Gabriel address her with the words, *Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with thee*, she received not the salutation with tranquil mind; but on hearing such sort of speech, and beholding the archangel Gabriel unexpectedly in her house, troubled in her thoughts at what he said about child-bearing -we may imagine her speaking to the archangel in some such words as these: 'Every thing appears to me very strange and extraordinary in thy coming here to-day.' And again: 'How is it that thou hast presumed thus boldly to intrude upon an unwedded Virgin, and to utter in her presence these thy incredible words? For thou sayest that I am to bring forth a child, and to conceive without marriage. . . . How am I to believe this thy romancing to me (*πῶς πιστεύσω σοι πρὸς ἐμὲ κωμῳδοῦντι*)?' What answer then does Gabriel make to her diffidence? 'What I learnt I said, what I heard I speak. *The Holy Ghost will come upon thee, and the power of the Most High will overshadow thee. And therefore the Holy that shall be born shall be called the Son of God.* . . . More than this I am unable to announce. For I have no mandate to say the manner how, O Virgin, but to be the minister of what regards the good tidings sent to thee. Be in amazement therefore with me at the mystery, and receive the good tidings without doubting.' She then says: *Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it done to me according to thy word.*" ‡

S. AMBROSE.

"And all that heard wondered; and at those things that were told them by the shepherds."—*Luke* ii. 18.

* *Serm. in Annunt. Fest.* Tom. 65, pp. 96-99.

† *Oratio B. Eleutherii, animam agentis ad Deum pro Fide et Ecclesia Tornacensi. Ib.* p. 99.

‡ *Serm.* iv., *De Sanct. Maria Deip.*, Patr. Gr. Tom. 93, p. 1453.

"Deem not that the words of the shepherds are to be despised as though of little worth. For from the shepherds Mary gathers faith. From the shepherds a people is congregated for the worship of God. They were, too, in admiration, all who heard what was said to them by the shepherds."

"But Mary kept all these words, pondering them in her heart."—*v.* 19.

"Let us here learn the chastity of holy Mary in all things, who no less modest in speech than in body, pondered over the arguments of faith in her heart. If Mary learns from the shepherds, why dost thou decline to hear from priests? If, before the Apostolic precepts, Mary keeps silence, why dost thou, after the Apostolic precepts, desire rather to teach than to learn? Understand that the fault is one of the person, not of the sex: for the sex is holy. In a word, Mary had not received the precept; she set the example." *

§ 2.—The Visitation.

Luke i. 39-58.

ORIGEN.

"Such as are more excellent come to those who are less so, that by their coming they may confer upon them some benefit. Thus it was the Saviour came to John, to sanctify his baptism. And Mary, as soon as she heard the Angel announce to her that she had conceived the Saviour, and that her cousin Elisabeth was with child, *rising up went with haste to the hilly parts, and entered the house of Elisabeth.* Meanwhile Jesus who was in her womb, hastened to sanctify John, who lay as yet in his mother's womb. Hence it was, that not until Mary came and saluted Elisabeth did the infant leap in the womb, but at once when Mary spoke the word, which the Son of God in His Mother's womb suggested to her, the infant leapt for joy, and then Jesus first made His precursor a prophet. It was moreover befitting that Mary, who had now with her the most august Son of God, should, after the colloquy of God with her, ascend to the mountains and dwell in higher parts. And so we read: *Mary, rising up in those days, went to the mountain parts.* It was befitting, too—since she was prompt and not slow—for her to hasten with eagerness, and, full as she was of the Holy Ghost, to be drawn to what was more sublime, and to be protected by the power of God, wherewith she had been overshadowed. . . ."

"*Whence is this to me?* This Elisabeth says, not because she did not know—especially now that she was filled with the Holy Ghost—that by the will of God the Lord's Mother had come to her; but in this sense: What good have I done? What deeds of mine are so great, that the Lord's Mother

* *In Luc.*, L. ii. c. ii. See also S. Jerome and Eusebius of Emisa, *supra*, on *Is.* viii. 3.

should come to me? By what justice, for what good works, on account of what fidelity of soul, have I merited this that the Mother of my Lord should come to me?

"*For behold, as soon as thy salutation came to my ears the infant leapt with exultation in my womb.* Holy was the soul of the blessed John. Hence, even whilst still shut up in his mother's womb, and yet to come into the world, he knew, as though by experience of sense, those things whereof Israel was ignorant. And hence he leapt, and not simply leapt, but leapt for joy. For he felt that his Lord was come, to sanctify His servant. May my lot be to be called a fool by the unbelieving, for believing such things. . . .

"*Blessed is she who hath believed, for there shall be a fulfilment of those things that were told her by the Lord.* Whereupon the Blessed Mary too magnifies the Lord Jesus. Her soul magnifies the Lord, her spirit God. . . ." *

"Before John, Elisabeth prophesies, before the birth of the Lord and Saviour, Mary prophesies. And as sin began from the woman, and then reached even to the man, so too the commencement of salvation had its origin from women, that the rest of women too, laying aside the frailty of their sex, might imitate the life and conversation of those holy women, who are now most conspicuous in the Gospel. Let us then consider the virginal prophecy. *My soul*, says Mary, *doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath exulted in God my Saviour.* Two things, namely, the soul and spirit, render a twofold praise. The soul extols the Lord, the spirit, God. Not that one is the praise of the Lord, another that of God; but because He who is God, the same is also the Lord; and He who is the Lord, the same is also God. The question is, how one can magnify the Lord. For if the Lord can receive neither increase, nor decrease, and what He is, He is; how does Mary now say, *My soul doth magnify the Lord?* If I consider the Lord our Saviour to be the Image of the invisible God,† and I behold my soul as made to the image of the Creator, so as to be an image of an image—for my soul is not specifically an image of God, but has been wrought to the likeness of a former image—then shall I see how—after the manner of those, who are used to paint images, and have, for instance, taken a certain portrait of a king to express the principal likeness, and commend the excellence of their art—each one of us, forming his soul to the image of Christ, fashions for Him a larger or smaller image—one either out of date and smeared, or a bright, shining, and even splendid copy of the principal and original likeness. If then I make a grand image of the image—I mean in my soul—and magnify it by act, thought, and speech, then is the image of God made great, and the Lord Himself whose image is in my heart, is magnified. And as the Lord is magnified in proportion to the likeness of our image, so if we should fall into sin, does that likeness grow faint and decrease: and instead of the Saviour's image we put on other likenesses; instead of the image of the Word of wisdom, of justice and the other virtues, we assume the form of the devil, so that of us may be said, *Ye serpents and generation of vipers.* . . ." ‡

"Thus the soul of Mary first magnifies the Lord, and then exults in God. For unless we first believe we are unable to exult.

"*For He hath looked upon*, she says, *the humility of His handmaiden.* What

* *Hom.* vii. *in Luc.* Tom. 13, pp. 1817-19.

† *Col.* i. 15.

‡ *Matt.* xxiii. 33.

was that humility of Mary upon which the Lord looked? What was there humble and abject in our Saviour's Mother, who bore in her womb the Son of God? In saying, then, *He hath looked upon the humility of His handmaiden*, it is as though she said, He hath looked upon her justice; He hath looked upon her temperance; He hath looked upon her fortitude and wisdom. Since it was meet that He should look upon her other virtues also. Some one may answer and say: I understand how God looks upon the justice and wisdom of His handmaid; but how He regards her humility is not quite plain. Let the questioner reflect that properly in the Scriptures humility alone is commended. For the Saviour says: *Learn of Me, for I am meek and humble of heart, and you shall find rest to your souls.** . . . God, says Mary, hath looked upon me who am humble, and following after the virtue of meekness and self-abasement.

"*For behold from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed.* If I simply take the meaning of *all generations* by itself, I interpret it of the faithful. But if I search for something more profound, I shall remark how much more and greater it is to say, *For He who is Mighty hath done to me great things*, since *every one who humbleth himself shall be exalted.*† God regarded then the humility of Blessed Mary, and on that account He who is Mighty did great things to her, *and Holy is His Name.*

"*And His mercy is from generation unto generations.* The mercy of God is not on one generation only, nor on two or three, nor even on five, but reaches for ever from generation unto generations to those who fear His power."‡

"John was not filled with the Holy Ghost until she came who carried Christ in her womb. But then he was both filled with the Holy Ghost and leapt (for joy), and made his mother to share with him. And Elisabeth cried out prophetically on account of him whom she bore an infant in her womb, and said to the Virgin: *Blessed art thou amongst women.* For of so great a grace no other woman was ever partaker, nor can be: since one only is the Divine Conception; one alone the Divine Birth; one alone is she who gave birth to Him who is God and man. Why then dost thou first salute me? Am I then she who bears the Saviour? It behoved me to come to thee, for thou art above all other women blessed: thou, my Lady, who bearest the undoing of the curse. She speaks in accordance with the son. For John spoke of himself as unworthy to come before Christ, and she calls herself unworthy of the Virgin's presence. What such great good, she says, has been done by me, *that the Mother of my Lord should come to me?* And she calls her who was yet a Virgin, Mother, prophetically by her word anticipating the event, and names the Saviour the fruit of her womb, because He was not to be from man, but from Mary alone; for they who spring from their parents' seed are their fruits.

"A Divine dispensation therefore led Mary to Elisabeth, that the witness of John to the Lord might be fulfilled even from the womb. For the babe leapt, and the Lord began in a manner thenceforth to show forth John to be a prophet.

"The journey of the Virgin had too its own particular stress (εἶχε τὴν οἰκείαν αὐτῆς σπουδήν). For she went to see Elisabeth; and to see and be confident of her wondrous conception, according to the word of the Gospel,

* *Matt.* xi. 29. † *Luke* xiv. 11.

‡ *Hom.* viii., *Ib.* pp. 1819-21.

hat by means thereof, the greater birth—the one, I mean, from the Virgin erself—should be believed. And to this faith Elisabeth's words concur, when she says: *And blessed is she who has believed, for there shall be a fulfilment of those things which were spoken to her by the Lord.* Mary thus became more confirmed in the belief of what she had heard from the Angel, from being called blessed in her believing. For the Angel foreshadowed, and Elisabeth, who also was pregnant, prophesied like things." *

"Both for all that is said and for the events recorded, there should be a reason worthy of the Holy Ghost, and of the faith of Christ to which as believers we are called. And therefore we must now seek the reason why Mary after her conception went to Elisabeth and remained with her three months; and also why Luke in writing the Gospel history records the fact, that Mary remained with Elisabeth three months and afterwards returned to her own house. There must certainly be some special reason for this. Whether the Lord has opened our heart (to understand it), this present discourse will show.

"Now if from the mere fact of Mary's visit to Elisabeth and saluting her, the infant exulted with joy, and Elisabeth, full of the Holy Ghost, uttered by the spirit of prophecy what is written in the Gospel, and in one single hour derived so great profit, we are only left to conjecture what progress John made during the three months that Mary was assisting Elisabeth. For it is quite unreasonable to suppose that in one single moment the infant should exult, and, so to say, revel with joy, and Elisabeth be filled with the Holy Ghost, and that during three months neither John nor Elisabeth should have further profited from the nearness of the Lord's Mother, and the presence of the Saviour Himself. We must therefore conclude that during the three months John was being trained and exercised, so to speak, in the art of an athlete by the holy Mother, and so prepared in his own mother's womb, that, born as he was in marvellous manner, he might be still more marvellously nurtured. For there is nothing recorded in writing of his being nursed in any extraordinary way, or how he was suckled at his mother's breasts, or how he was placed in the arms of her who carried him: but it is at once said: *And he was in the deserts until the day of his manifestation to Israel.*" †

S. AMBROSE.

"And Mary rising up in those days went into the hill-country with haste into a city of Juda. And she entered into the house of Zachary, and saluted Elisabeth."—*Luke* i. 39, 40.

"On Mary's hearing from the Angel that Elisabeth had conceived, she was not as one incredulous of the divine word, or hesitating at the news, or in doubt about the fact; but with glad and ready will, prompted by pious devotion at the service she was to render, and hasting with joy, she set forth to the mountains. And whither, full of God as now she was, should she press forward with haste, but to what was higher? The grace of the Holy Ghost

* *Fragment. in Lucam, Ib.* p. 1902.

† *Luke* i. 80. *Hom.* ix., *Ib.* p. 1822. S. Jerome translated into Latin, 9 Homilies of Origen on S. Luke, for Paula and Eustochium, of which this is the 9th. They are found also in the 7th vol. of S. Jerome's works.

knows not tardy efforts. . . . Mary, who before was wont to pass her time alone retired in her cell, was now not deterred from going into public through virginal modesty, nor kept back from what she had at heart by the roughness of the mountains, nor retarded in her service of charity by the tedious length of the journey. To the hill-country, then, leaving her home behind her, the Virgin set forth: a Virgin mindful of duty, regardless of any insult [to which her modesty might be exposed], strong in affection, though weak in sex. . . . You, virgins, have learnt Mary's modesty: now learn also her humility. It was she who went to her cousin, the younger to the older: and not only was she first to go, but also the first to salute; for it is proper that the more chaste a virgin is, the more humble she should be. . . . And you should remark that here the superior comes to the inferior to proffer help; Mary to Elisabeth, Christ to John. So too later on, the Lord went to the baptism in order to sanctify John's baptism. The blessed effects of Mary's coming and of the Lord's presence are quickly made manifest.

"And it came to pass, that when Elisabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the infant leaped in her womb, and she was filled with the Holy Ghost."—*v.* 41.

"Mark the distinction and particular force of the several words. Elisabeth was the first to hear the voice, but John the first to feel the grace. She heard in the order of nature, he leapt by reason of the mystery. Elisabeth was sensible of Mary's arrival, John of the Lord's; the woman of the Woman's, the babe of the Babe's. The women speak grace; the infants within are operating grace, and making the first essay of piety through their mothers' advances, whilst with a twofold miracle the mothers are prophesying by the spirit of their little ones. The infant has leaped, the mother is filled. The mother is not filled before the child, but when the child was filled with the Holy Ghost, he filled the mother also. John leapt with joy (exultavit), and Mary's spirit exulted. When John leapt, Elisabeth is filled. Take note, it is not said that Mary is filled with the Spirit, but that her own spirit exults: for the Incomprehensible is incomprehensibly operating in His Mother: and Elisabeth is filled after conception, Mary before conception.

"Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb."—*v.* 42.

"The Spirit knows well His own speech and never forgets it. Prophecy, moreover, is full not only of things of marvel, but also of propriety of words. What is this *Fruit of the womb*, but that whereof it is said: *Behold the inheritance of the Lord are children: the reward, the fruit of the womb?* * That is, the inheritance of the Lord are children who are the reward of that Fruit which came forth from the womb of Mary. He is Himself the Fruit of the womb, the Flower of the root, concerning whom well did Isaias prophesy, saying, *There shall come forth a rod out of the root of Jesse, and a flower shall rise up out of his root,*† for the root is the family of the Jews, the rod Mary, the flower Mary's Christ; who like fruit of a good tree for our advancement in virtue now flowers, now fructifies in us, and now is renewed by the resurrection of the body again to life (*rediviva corporis resurrectione reparatur*).

* *Ps.* cxxvi. 3. † *Is.* xi. 1.

"And whence is this to me, that the Mother of my Lord should come to me?"—*v.* 43.

"Elisabeth speaks thus not as though she were ignorant: for she knows it to be the grace and operation of the Holy Ghost, that the mother of the prophet should be saluted by the Lord's Mother for her infant's benefit. But as one who recognises that this is not of human merit, but a privilege of divine grace, she says, *Whence is this to me?* That is, How does so great a good befall me, that the Mother of my Lord should come to me? I acknowledge it as nought of mine. *Whence is this to me?* For what justice, or what deeds, for what merits—since these are not the ordinary services of women—is it, *that the Mother of my Lord should come to me?* I feel the miracle, I acknowledge the mystery: the Lord's Mother pregnant with the Word, is full of God.

"For behold as soon as the voice of thy salutation sounded in my ears, the infant in my womb leaped for joy. And blessed art thou that hast believed."—*vv.* 44, 45.

"Thou seest that Mary doubted not, but believed; and obtained the fruit of faith. *Blessed*, says Elisabeth, *art thou that hast believed.* And blessed too are you who have heard and have believed: for every soul that believes, both conceives and gives birth to the Word of God, and acknowledges His works. Let then Mary's soul be in each one of you, that it may magnify the Lord: let Mary's spirit be in every one, that it may exult in God. If Christ has but one Mother according to the flesh, yet, according to faith, Christ is the fruit of all. For every soul receives the Word of God, provided it be immaculate and free from vices, and preserve chastity with modesty undefiled. Every soul therefore that can be such, magnifies the Lord, even as *the soul of Mary magnified the Lord, and her spirit exulted in God her Saviour.* For magnified the Lord is, as we elsewhere read, *Magnify the Lord with me.** Not that by human voice aught can be added to God, but because He is magnified in us. For Christ is the Image of God; and so if a soul does anything just or religious, it magnifies that Image of God, to whose likeness it has been created. And thus whilst magnifying Him, it becomes itself more sublime by a certain participation of His magnitude, so as to appear to express in itself that same image by a splendid colouring of good works, and a, so to say, emulation of virtue. Now Mary's soul magnified the Lord, and her spirit exulted in God, because in her soul and spirit devoted to the Father and the Son, with pious affection she adored One God, from whom are all things, and One Lord, by whom are all things.

"We may gather that the more excellent was the person of Mary, the fuller was her prophecy: and it seems not without meaning, both that Elisabeth should prophesy before John, and Mary giving birth to the Lord; since now the first essays of human redemption are secretly making their way. For as from woman began sin, so too from women good things take their origin: that so women laying aside their womanish works may renounce weakness, and the soul, that has no sex, may, like Mary who knows not error, follow after chastity with religious zeal.

* *Ps.* xxxiii. 4.

"And Mary abode with her about three months, and she returned to her own house."—*v.* 56.

"Well is holy Mary represented as having fulfilled her office of charity, and also observed the mystical number. For friendly intercourse was not the only reason of her stay, but also the advancement of so great a prophet. For if at her first entrance such great progress was made, that at Mary's salutation the infant leapt in the womb, and the infant's mother was filled with the Holy Ghost; how greatly must we not suppose this progress was increased by the presence of holy Mary during so long a time? *Now Mary remained with her three months*, during which time the prophet was being anointed and trained as a good athlete in his mother's womb; and was thus being prepared with virtue and strength proportioned to the exceeding greatness of the conflict that was before him." *

"Mary and Elisabeth were kinswomen: both were of the tribe of Juda. How beautiful! for the one gave birth to Christ's precursor, the other to Christ; one conceived of the Holy Ghost, the other prophesied, filled with the Holy Ghost. The kinship of these two according to the flesh serves to show that spiritual relationship which is according to God." †

"The presence of the Word drew forth virtue from the soul, as the presence of Mary, when pregnant, instructed and formed (erudivit) John whilst still in the womb, so that he leaped in the womb, and exulted, recognising the Lord's presence." ‡

"Mary's grace was so great that not only did she keep the grace of virginity in herself, but also bestowed the privilege of purity on those whom she went to see. She visited John the Baptist, and he leaped in his mother's womb before he was born. At Mary's voice the little infant exulted, submissively hearkening to her (obsecutus), whilst yet unborn. And with good reason was it, that he persevered perfectly chaste in body, he whom the Lord's Mother for three months trained with, so to say, the oil of her presence, and the unguent of her own most perfect chastity. She was, moreover, herself afterwards given to the care of John the Evangelist, who knew not wedlock. And hence I marvel not that he above all others spoke divine mysteries, since he had close at hand the court of the heavenly sacraments." §

S. GREGORY THAUMATURGUS.

"And it came to pass, that when Elisabeth heard the salutation of Mary," etc.

"Thus the voice of Mary wrought with power, and filled Elisabeth with the Holy Ghost. And by her tongue, as from an ever-flowing fountain she sent forth a stream of gracious gifts, under inspiration of the prophetic Spirit, to her kinswoman," etc.||

S. JEROME.

"John the Baptist exulted and frolicked (lusit) at Mary's entrance. For he heard the words of the Lord thundering loud through the mouth of the

* *Expos. in Luc.* in loc. † *Ibid. in Luc.* iii. 23.
‡ *De Isaac et Anima*, c. vi. n. 53, Tom. 14, p. 547.
§ *De Inst. Virg.*, cap. vii. P. L. Tom. p. 333.
|| Int. Opp. Greg. Thaum. Or. ii., *De Annunt. B.M.V.*

Virgin, and yearned, with transports of joy, to break forth from his mother's womb, and go to meet Him." *

"Elisabeth and Zachary may teach us, according to most certain testimony, how far inferior they are in sanctity to Blessed Mary the Lord's Mother, who, in the consciousness she has of God dwelling within her, freely proclaims: *Behold from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed. Because He who is mighty hath done great things to me, and holy is His Name. And His mercy is from generation unto generations to them that fear Him. He hath showed might in His arm.* And herein remark, that she says she is blessed, not through her own merit and virtue, but by the clemency of God who dwells in her." †

S. CHRYSOSTOM.

"Christ caused Mary to salute Elisabeth, that the word, coming from the mother's womb where the Lord was dwelling, and entering by the ears of Elisabeth, might descend to John, and there anoint him as a prophet." ‡

§ 3. The Purification, and Presentation in the Temple.

ORIGEN.

"And thy own soul a sword shall pierce."—*Luke* ii. 35.

"What is that sword which pierces not only the hearts of others, but even the heart of Mary? It is written plainly, that at the time of the Passion all the Apostles were scandalised: the Lord Himself saying, *All you shall be scandalised this night.*§ All together then were scandalised, so much so that even Peter the prince of the apostles made the threefold denial. What! Are we to suppose that when the apostles were scandalised, the Lord's Mother was exempt from scandal? If she suffered not scandal in the Lord's Passion, Jesus did not die for her sins. But if *all have sinned, and need the glory of God, being justified and redeemed by His grace;* assuredly Mary was at that time scandalised. And this it is that Simeon now prophesies, saying, *And thy own soul:* Thou who knowest that, without human co-operation, virgin thou didst bring forth, thou who didst hear from Gabriel, *The Holy Ghost will come upon thee, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee:* even thee shall the sword of unbelief pierce, and thou shalt be struck with the spear of doubt, and thy thoughts shall tear thee asunder, when thou shalt see Him whom thou hadst heard to be the Son of God, and knewest to have been begotten by no seed of man, crucified and dying, and subject to human torments, and at last with tears complaining and saying, *Father, if it be possible, let this chalice pass from Me.*" ¶

* *Epist.* cvii. 3, *Ad Lætam.* † *Contr. Pelagianos.* n. 16.
‡ *Op. Imperfect.* Hom. 7. Int. Opp. S. Chrysost.
§ *Matt.* xxvi. 31. || *Rom.* iii. 23, 24. ¶ *In Luc.* Hom. xvii.

Origen's interpretation of the sword that should pierce the Blessed Virgin's soul, as one of doubt and unbelief, is not only entirely arbitrary on his part, but also altogether opposed to the obvious tenor of Simeon's words: there being nothing in them to suggest such a view, but everything rather to imply the contrary. Having poured forth his canticle of praise, and blessed Mary and Joseph, Simeon addresses his speech exclusively to her.

He first speaks of two classes in Israel, those to whom her Divine Child will be an occasion of scandal on account of their rejection of Him through unbelief, and those to whom He will be a cause of resurrection on account of their acceptance of Him by faith. Surely, if any reference to Mary were implied in these words, their whole context would suggest that she, to whom Simeon spoke them, and whom as the Child's Mother he had blessed, would have a first place amongst those who should believe in Him for their resurrection and life. What Simeon then says to Mary concerning the sword that should pierce her own soul stands apart from his previous utterance, and shows no connection with the contradiction which he foretold her Child would meet with on the part of unbelievers. The words are for the Mother alone, predicting some peculiarly bitter anguish that was one day to try her soul. Nothing is implied in them that bears on others, or compares their conduct with hers.

Origen's interpretation is, moreover, opposed to whatever else is written of Mary in the Gospels. If there is in them one thing more than another for which she is conspicuously commended, it is her faith. *Blessed*, cried Elisabeth, *art thou that hast believed*.* And the Evangelist records that Mary not only believed, but habitually laid up the divine word and pondered it in her heart.† Hence S. Augustine says that the Blessed Virgin by her faith conceived Christ in her mind before she conceived Him in her womb (mente prius quam ventre), and through the excellence of her faith merited to obtain above all others that blessedness which Our Lord Himself pronounced on those who hear the word of God and keep it, and declared to be greater than that of being His own Mother. That Mary's faith remained firm and unshaken throughout the Passion of her Son, is evidenced by the constancy with which she stood by His Cross during His three hours' agony, when all the Apostles, save S. John who records the scene, had fled away; and also by the tender words which Jesus spoke when dying, as

* *Luke* i. 45. † *Ib.* ii. 19, 51.

He bequeathed to her for son in His own stead *the disciple whom He loved*, and commended her in turn to his filial care.

But if Origen's scriptural exegesis is here at fault, equally so also is his logic. In saying: "If Mary suffered not scandal, i.e., Mary was at that time scandalised," the sum of his argument is: Mary must needs have been in some way a sinner, for otherwise Christ did not die for her. But He died for all, since all as sinners need His death. Therefore, he concludes, Mary must have had part in the scandal which the Apostles took at her Son's passion. A conclusion which no way follows. For Origen's argument could prove no more than that the Blessed Virgin was in some actual sense a sinner. And such she would be (absit hypothesis) by original sin alone, or by some actual sin of any sort. To fasten upon her the particular sin of loss of faith at the Passion is simply a gratuitous assumption which is out of place in the reasoning.

If this interpretation had been Origen's only, we should not have delayed so long on its refutation, for, as is well known, he has many other erroneous opinions in his writings. But unfortunately it has been followed by S. Basil, S. Cyril of Alexandria, and other Greek Fathers,* who repeat not only Origen's argument, but more or less even his very words.

Origen in his Homily on the Purification says that, if the reading of *Luke* ii. 22, instead of being τοῦ καθαρισμοῦ αὐτῶν, had been αὐτῆς, referring only to Mary, he should have boldly asserted that she needed purification after childbirth, because she was human (homo). But finding it *eorum* and that more than one is signified, he says that Jesus needed purification, as being unclean, or stained with some defilement (*sorde*). He quotes *Job* xiv. 4, 5, remarking that there it is not said "nemo mundus *a peccato*," but, "nemo mundus *a sorde*," and to show the difference of meaning between peccatum and sordes he quotes *Is.* iv. 4. Every soul, he says, clothed with a human body has its *sordes;* and as our Lord of His own will assumed a human body of holy flesh, but to the likeness of sinful flesh—*He was clothed with sordid garments*—,† consequently, it was fitting that there should be offered for Him what was customary, to legally purge the defilement. Origen then insinuates that this is the reason also why infants are baptised for the remission of sins; and seems to deny or be ignorant of the doctrine of original sin.

* S. Ambrose, whilst borrowing from Origen on the Visitation (compare p. 142-5, with 145-8, *supra*), takes care not to do so here.

† *Zach.* iii. 3.

Elsewhere he says:—

"Mary was not like other mothers, but a pure Virgin, not amenable to the Levitical law." *

"He has Jesus who is bold to say: *I live, not I, but Christ liveth in me.* † That we then also, as we stand in the temple, and are holding the Son of God, and embracing Him, may be worthy of pardon, and of progress towards better things, let us pray to God Almighty, let us pray also to the little Jesus Himself whom we desire to speak to, and to hold in our arms: to whom is glory and power, world without end. Amen." ‡

S. BASIL.

"Since every soul at the time of the Passion was subject to some doubting, according to what Our Lord said, *All ye shall be scandalised in Me*, Simeon predicts even of Mary herself, that when she should stand at the Cross, and see what was going on, and hear what was being said--after the testimony of Gabriel, after the ineffable knowledge of the divine Conception, after the great showing forth of miracles—there would be, he says, a certain wavering even about her soul also. For it behoved the Lord to taste of death for all, and being made the propitiation of the world, to justify all in His blood. Therefore thyself too, who hast learnt the things regarding the Lord, shall some doubt reach. This is meant by the sword. *That thoughts may be revealed from many hearts,* signifies that after the scandal that has taken place through Christ's Cross, both to the disciples and also to Mary herself some speedy healing shall come from the Lord to confirm their hearts in faith in Him." §

* Hom. viii., *In Levit.* xii. 2. Other Fathers say the same; thus Procopius Gazæus, *Comment.* Patr. Gr. Tom. 87, p. 1964, who adds that "Mary was the light cloud which bore Our Lord to Egypt."

† *Gal.* ii. 20.

‡ *Hom.* xv., *In Luc.* We may hence gather that Origen held that the Son might be prayed to with the Father, but with a different kind of prayer. His doctrine with regard to prayer to Our Lord Jesus Christ, which appears in other places of his works, gained for him great opposition. He was generally understood to teach that the Son is not to be prayed to at all; nor the Father together with the Son. See the passage from his *De Oratione*, n. 14, quoted *infra* in Chapter on *Intercession*, etc.

§ *Epist.* 260, 8. P. G. Tom. 32, p. 966. On this passage Petavius says: "We must in truth confess that here S. Basil greatly strays both from the Gospel history, and from the right interpretation of Simeon's words. For neither do the words themselves, nor Mary's constancy, as she beheld her Son's death before her very eyes, nor the words then addressed to her by her dying Son, allow us to entertain any such suspicion of the holy Mother of God. But though her faith did not waver in the least, still her maternal heart did not lack that grief which Simeon foretells under the name of a sword. Basil seems to have derived this opinion from Origen, although he was cautious enough in reading that author. Some other writers after Basil followed the same interpretation." Petavius then recounts them (*De Incarn.* Lib. 14, c. 1). Amongst them are Titus Bostrensis, S. Amphilochius (Orat. 3 *De occursu Domini*), and the author of *In Ps.* xiii. (int. Opp. S. Chrysost.). They generally agree that at once after the doubt, Mary was confirmed in faith.

S. CYRIL OF ALEXANDRIA.

"Simeon therefore said to the holy Virgin: *And thine own soul a sword shall pierce*, by the sword perhaps signifying the sorrow she had on account of Christ, when she saw crucified Him to whom she had given birth, and knew not at all that He would be superior to death, and rise again. And wonder not if the Virgin knew it not, since too in this we shall find the holy apostles but of little faith. . . ." *

S. HILARY OF POITIERS.

S. Hilary gives quite another view of Simeon's words:—

"The sword will pass through the soul of Blessed Mary that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed. If that Virgin who contained God is to come to the severity of the Judgment, who will be bold to desire to be judged by God?" †

S. METHODIUS.

"It became, indeed, the Lord of the Law and the Prophets to do all things in accordance with His own Law, and not to make void the Law, but to fulfil it; and so to connect with the passing away of the Law the beginning of His grace. Therefore it is that the Mother who was superior to the Law, submits to the Law. And she, the holy and undefiled one, observes that period of forty days that was appointed for the unclean." ‡

"Hence it was that the Ark of God removed from the stable at Bethlehem . . and rested upon the mountains of Sion; and receiving into her pure bosom as upon a lofty throne—such as transcends the nature of man—the Monarch of all, she presented Him there to God the Father—the Son joint-partner of His throne, and inseparable from Him—together with that pure and undefiled flesh which He had from her assumed. . . . She goes up therefore to the temple, she who was more exalted than the temple, clothed with a double glory—the glory, I mean, of undefiled virginity, and that of ineffable child-bearing, the benediction of the Law, and the sanctification of grace. . . .

"Tremendous, verily, is the mystery connected with thee, O Mother Virgin, thou spiritual throne, glorified and made worthy of God. . . . *And the lintels of the doors*, says the prophet, *were raised at the voice of them that cried.* § By which is signified the veil of the temple overshadowing before the ark of the Covenant which typified thee. . . . For if to the ark, which was the image and type of thy sanctity, such honour was paid by God, that to no one but to the priestly order was the access to it open, or ingress allowed to behold it—the veil separating it off, and keeping the vestibule as that of a queen—how great, and what sort of veneration is due to thee from us, who are of all the least, to thee who art indeed a Queen; to thee who art in truth the living

* *Hom. in Occurs. Domini.*

† *In Ps.* cxviii. 20, Patr. Lat. Tom. 9, p. 522. On the Presentation, see also S. Greg. Nyssen., *In diem natal. Christi.*, Int. dubia, Patr. Gr. Tom. 46, p. 1137.

‡ S. Methodius, *Orat. de Simeone et Anna* ii. Patr. Græc. Tom. 18, p. 332.

§ *Is.* vi. 4.

Ark of God, the Law-giver; to thee who hast verily become the heaven that contains Him who can be contained of none? . . ." *

"Let then, says Simeon, what I have thus far said in brief, suffice for the present as my offering of thanks to God. But what now shall I say to thee, O Mother Virgin and Virgin Mother? For since hers is no human work, her praise, too, exceeds the power of man. Wherefore the dimness of my poverty will I make bright with the splendour of the gifts of the spirits that around thee shine, and offering to thee of thine own, from the immortal I will pluck a garland for thy sacred and divinely-crowned head. With thine ancestral hymns will I greet thee, O daughter of David, and Mother of David's Lord and God. For it were base and inauspicious to adorn thee, who in thine own glory excellest, with that which belongeth to another. Receive, then, O Lady most beneficent, gifts precious, and such as are fitted to thee alone, O thou who art exalted above all generations, and who amongst all created things, both visible and invisible, shinest forth as the most honourable.

"Blessed is the root of Jesse, and thrice blessed the house of David in which thou hast sprung up. *God is in the midst of thee, and thou shalt not be moved. For the Most High hath made holy the place of His tabernacle.*† For in thee the covenants and oaths made of God unto our fathers have received a most glorious fulfilment, since by thee *the Lord hath become the God of Hosts with us.*‡ That bush which might not be touched, which beforehand shadowed forth thy figure endowed with divine majesty, bare God without being consumed, who manifested Himself to the prophet just so far as He willed to be seen.§ Then again, that hard and rugged rock, which imaged forth the grace and refreshment that has sprung from thee for the entire world, brought forth abundantly in the desert out of its thirsty side a healing draught for the fainting people.‖ Yea, moreover, the rod of the priest, which without culture blossomed forth in fruit,¶ the pledge and earnest of a perpetual priesthood, furnished no contemptible symbol of thy supernatural child-bearing.** What still? Did not the mighty Moses expressly declare that on account of these types of thee, hard to be understood,†† he delayed longer on the mountain, in order that he might learn, O holy one, the mysteries that are with thee connected? For being commanded to build the ark . . . he appointed it to be the receptacle of the Law, and covered it with the wings of the cherubim, most evidently presignifying thee, the Mother of God. . . . The golden pot also, as a most certain type, preserved the manna contained therein. . . .‡‡ The prophet Elias likewise, as prescient of thy chastity, and being emulous of it through the Spirit, bound around him the crown of that fiery life, and was by the divine decree adjudged superior to death.§§ Also prefiguring thee, his successor Eliseus,‖‖ having been instructed by a wise master, and anticipating thy presence who wast not yet born, by certain sure indications of the things that would have place, hereafter ministered help and healing to those who thereof had need, which was of a virtue beyond nature; now with a new cruse that contained healing salt, curing the deadly waters, to show that the world was to be re-created by the mystery manifested in thee; now with unleavened

* *Ib.* iv., v., pp. 358-60. † *Ps.* xliv. 5. ‡ *Ib.* v. 8.
§ *Exod.* iii. 1-6. ‖ *Exod.* xvii. 1-6. ¶ *Numb.* xvii. 8.
** *Is.* xi. 1, *Heb.* ix. 4. †† *Exod.* xxv. 8 sq.
‡‡ *Exod.* xvi. 33, 34, *Heb.* ix. 3-5. §§ 4 *Kings* ii. 11. ‖‖ *Ecclus.* xlviii. 1.

neal, in type responding to thy virginal child-bearing, banishing from the ood the bitterness of death; and then again, by supernatural means, rising uperior to the natural elements in the Jordan,* and thus exhibiting in signs eforehand, the descent of Our Lord into Hades, and His wonderful deliver- nce of those who were held fast in corruption. For all things yielded and uccumbed to that divine image which prefigured thee.

"But why do I digress, and lengthen out my discourse, giving it the rein th these illustrations, and that, when the truth of thy matter stands like a lumn before the eye, wherein it were better and more profitable to luxuriate d take delight? Wherefore bidding adieu to the spiritual narrations and ndrous deeds of the saints throughout all ages, I pass on to thee who art ways to be had in remembrance, and who holdest the helm, as it were, of is festival.

"Blessed art thou, all-blessed, and the desired of all. In benedictions of e Lord is thy name, O thou most full of grace, and grateful exceedingly to d, Mother of God, and torch-bearer of the faithful. Thou art the circum- ription, so to speak, of Him who cannot be circumscribed; the root of the eliest flower that blooms;† the Mother of the Creator; the nurse of the urisher; the circumference of Him who embraces all things; the upholder Him who upholds all things by His Word;‡ the gate of the first rising in sh of God;§ the tongs of that cleansing coal;‖ the little bosom of the som of all; the fleece of the incomprehensible wool;¶ the life-giving cistern Bethlehem,** of David's longing, whence a draught of immortality gushed rth; the mercy-seat from which God in human form was made known unto en;†† the spotless robe of Him who clothes Himself with light as with a rment.‡‡ Thou hast lent at interest to God, who stands in need of nothing, at flesh which He had not, in order that the Omnipotent might become at which it was His good pleasure to be. What is more splendid than is? What than this more sublime? *He who fills earth and heaven, Whose e all things*,§§ became in need of thee, for thou hast lent to God divine flesh hich He had not. Thou hast clad in armour the Mighty One with that eauteous panoply of the body, whereby it has become possible for Him to be en by mine eyes. And I, in order that I might freely approach to behold im, have received that by which *all the fiery darts of the wicked shall be ienched*. ‖‖ Hail, hail! Mother and handmaid of God. Hail, hail! Thou to hom the great Creditor of all is a debtor. We are all debtors to God, but thee He is Himself indebted. For He who said, *Honour thy father and thy other*,¶¶ will—Himself herein being willing to be tested—most assuredly have ept inviolate that grace, and His own decree towards her who ministered to im the nativity of His own choice, and will have glorified in a manner orthy of God her whom He, without father, wrote down to be for Himself husbandless Mother. Even so must these things be. For the hymns which e offer to thee, O thou most holy and admirable habitation of God, are no erely useless and ornamental words. Nor again, is thy spiritual laudation

* 4 *Kings* ii. 20, iv. 41, v.
† *Is.* xi. 1.
‡ *Heb.* i. 3.
§ *Ezech.* xliv. 2.
‖ *Is.* vi. 6.
¶ *Judges* vi. 37.
** 2 *Kings* xxiii. 15-17.
†† *Exod.* xxxv. 17.
‡‡ *Ps.* cii. 2.
§§ *Jer.* xxxiii. 24, 1. *Par.* xxix. 14.
‖‖ *Ephes.* vi. 16.
¶¶ *Exod.* xx. 12.

mere secular trifling or the shoutings of false flattery, O thou who of God art praised, and hadst God for thy suckling, even Him who by nativity giveth unto mortals their beginning of being; but they are of clear and evident truth. But the time would fail us, ages and succeeding generations too, to render worthy benediction to thee, the Mother of *the King of ages*,* even as in a certain place the illustrious prophet says, teaching us how incomprehensible thou art: *How great is the house of God, and how vast is the place of His possession! It is great, and hath no end, it is high and immense.*† For verily, verily, this prophetic oracle, and most true saying, is concerning thy grandeur, since thou alone hast been deemed worthy to share with God the things of God, thou who hast alone borne in flesh God, of God the Father the Only-Begotten, and eternally Begotten. So do they believe who hold fast to the pure faith. . . ."

After some short space, S. Methodius with words of marvellous beauty addresses the Church, and in terms that remind us of his praises of Mary. We can here give but one or other fragment.

"Hail, City of the Great King, wherein were consummated the mysteries of our salvation. Hail, heaven upon earth, thou Sion, city henceforth faithful unto the Lord. Hail, and *shine, O Jerusalem, for thy Light is come*,‡ the Light Eternal, the Light for ever to endure. . . . Hail, City, holy and elect of the Lord. Keep festally with gladness thy feasts, for they will not multiply so as to wax old and pass away. Hail, thou City most happy, for *glorious things are spoken of thee.*§ . . . Hail to thee, thou Catholic Church, which has been planted in all the earth: and do thou rejoice with us. *Fear not little flock* the storms || of the enemy, *for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the Kingdom*,¶ and that you should tread upon the necks of your enemies. Hail, and rejoice thou that wast once barren, and without seed unto godliness, but who hast now many children of faith."

He thus concludes: "Hail to thee for ever, thou Virgin Mother of God, our unceasing joy, for unto thee do I once more return. Thou art the beginning of our festival; thou its middle; thou its end; the most precious pearl of the kingdom; verily the fat of every victim; the living altar of the Bread of life. Hail, thou treasure of the love of God; hail, thou font of the Son's love for man; hail overshadowed mountain of the Holy Ghost.** Thou gleamedst, sweet-gift-bestowing Mother of the Solar Light, with insupportable fires of over-fervent charity, bringing forth in the end that which was conceived before the beginning, making manifest the mystery hidden and unspeakable, even the invisible Son of the Father, the Arbiter of peace, astoundingly become less than all littleness. Therefore we beseech thee, who art of all the best, and gloriest in thy maternal honours and boldness of speech, make unceasing remembrance of us, all-holy Mother of God—of us, I say, who make our boast of thee, and in hymns august celebrate thy memory that will ever

* 1 *Tim.* i. 17.

† *Baruch* iii. 24, 25.

‡ *Is.* lx. 1.

§ *Ps.* lxxxvi. 3.

|| τρικυμίας, the most huge and mighty waves; as every third wave was supposed to be larger. S. Methodius perhaps here alludes to Diocletian's persecution, in which he suffered martyrdom.

¶ *Luke* xii. 32.

** *Hab.* iii. 3, *Luke* i. 35.

ive, and never fade away. And do thou also, O honoured and venerable Simeon, thou earliest host of our holy religion, and teacher of the resurrection f the faithful, be our patron and advocate with the Saviour God, whom thou ast deemed worthy to receive in thine arms. For we together with thee ing to Christ who has power of life and death, saying: Thou art true Light f true Light, true God of true God, one Lord before the assumption of manity and after the all-glorious assumption of humanity, God of Thine n self and not by grace, but for our sakes perfect Man also; of Thyself y nature King, peerless, absolute, and sovereign; for us and for our valion also in the form of a servant, but immaculately and without defile- nt. For Thou who art incorruption hast come to set corruption free, that ou mightest render all things incorrupt. For Thine is the glory, and the wer, and greatness, and majesty, with the Father and the Holy Ghost for ver and ever. Amen." *

S. AMBROSE.

"As it is written in the law of the Lord, Every male opening e womb shall be called holy to the Lord."—*Luke* ii. 23.

"By the words of the Law was promised the Virgin's Offspring, and verily oly, because immaculate . . . even that Holy One in whom the pious pre- iptions of the divine Law figured forth the future mystery: since He alone was who was to open the womb of the holy virgin Church, of immaculate cundity, to give birth to the peoples of God. . . .

"And thy own soul a sword shall pierce."—*v.* 35.

"Neither writing nor history teaches that Mary departed this life by artyrdom of body: and it is not the soul but the body that is pierced by a aterial sword. Thus Simeon shows that the prudence of Mary was not norant of the heavenly mystery. *For the word of God, living and strong, and arper than any sharpest sword, penetrating even to the division of the soul and irit, of the joints also and the marrow, searches out the thoughts and the secrets souls.* . . ." †

S. PAULINUS AND S. AUGUSTINE.

S. Paulinus thus writes to S. Augustine, asking him to explain rtain passages of Scripture, one of which is the prediction made y Simeon to the Blessed Virgin.

"Are we to understand Simeon to be here prophesying of Mary's passion, hich is nowhere recorded? Or not rather of her maternal affection, through hich later on at the time of the Passion, when standing by the Cross whereon

* *Ibid.*, pp. 369-381. The two Homilies under the name of S. Methodius, at, *viz.*, *On Simeon and Anna the day that they met the Lord in the Temple*, d the other entitled, *On the branches of palms*, are held to be of doubtful uthenticity. But they are very ancient, and certainly well within the period hich we are reviewing. The above translation is borrowed from the *Ante-Nicene Christian Library*.

† *Heb.* iv. 12, *Expos. in Luc.* L. ii.

was crucified her own offspring, her mother's heart was transfixed with sorrow and that that sword of the Cross (illa crucis rhomphæa) which pierced with wounds her Son according to the flesh, before her very gaze, penetrated also into her own soul? . . . He says not 'thy flesh,' but *thy soul*, wherein is contained the affection of parental love; and the sharp sting of grief which acts as a sword. . . . Thus was it with Mary, who was tortured by the sadness or dolour of inward affection. For it was especially her maternal thought that had led her to the Cross of our Lord, in whom she was then contemplating only the son of her own body, so that when now she saw Him dead, she mourned over Him through human infirmity, and gave herself up to His being buried without allowing herself any presumption [or, not taking to herself beforehand any encouraging thought] concerning His resurrection; because the pain of the Passion then before her eyes served to obscure the trust of the admiration [or, cast a film over the faith in the wonder] that was soon about to follow.*

"Still however, as she stood near His Cross the Lord consoled her—not trembling with the weakness of a dying man, but as having under His control the very death whereby He was dying, and with the full power of one who was living, and the firm courage of one who was to rise again—He admonishes her from the Cross, speaking of the blessed Apostle John, by the words *Woman, behold thy son*, and then in turn says to him as he stood with her *Behold thy Mother*. Thus does He, in the moment of His departure from human weakness—whereby He was born of woman—to the eternity of God to be in the glory of God the Father, make over to man the rights of human piety [that is, of His own filial duty, and loving care of His Mother]; and chooses out the younger of His disciples, that He may with fitness assign the Virgin Mother to the virgin Apostle. By one act He here teaches us at once two lessons. First, He leaves us a pattern of filial piety by the solicitude He shows for His Mother, in that whilst He is leaving her in body, He will not leave her in His care for her. Nay, for that matter, not even in body will He leave her, for Him whom she was then beholding dying, soon was she to see again alive. The other lesson is one that belongs to the faith of all—that saving mystery, I mean, of His goodness as her Son, whereby in accordance with the divine plan, He sets His seal to, and makes known, by this His utterance, things that were kept secret, namely, that to another He would make over His own Mother, to be held as Mother, and as such to be console

* Nihil sibi de ipsius resurrectione præsumens, quia subsecuturæ admira tionis fidem in oculis posita passionis pœna cæcabat. S. Paulinus, remark Sacchinus in his note, well explains how the sword could pierce the soul o Mary, by her not turning aside her thought to such considerations as migh have assuaged her sorrow. For, no doubt, had she chosen to think ver intently on the resurrection, or to fix her mind on the most just, benign, an admirable plan of human redemption, and the fruit of Christ's Passion, sh might have greatly calmed her grief. But because it was not seasonable, no seemly, that, when her Son was voluntarily undergoing such bitter torment she should shrink from taking part in His sufferings, she reflected rather o what might aggravate her grief, *viz.*, how holy, obedient, dutiful, and lovin was her Son, and how grievous and undeserved were His torments. Thus i was that her then present anguish hid for the time the admiration and jo which her soul would have otherwise felt at the thought of the glory an majesty of His approaching resurrection. *Note* 214, Patr. Lat. Tom. 6 p. 903.

that other in His own stead; and that to her, on the other hand, He usted—nay, for me so to express it, begat—a new son in place of His own y;* whereby He would show that she neither had nor has any other Son, Himself, who was born of that Virgin. For not even the Saviour would had so great care of her desolate state, had He not been her only Son.

"But to return to Simeon's words, on which, I confess, my mind is in the : *And thy soul a sword shall pierce.* This, if taken literally, is to my mind ether obscure; for we nowhere read of the most Blessed Mary being put ath, nor of any thing that could lead us to suppose that the saint was phesying of her martyrdom by a material sword." †

In answer to the question of S. Paulinus, S. Augustine tes:—

"With regard to the words of Simeon, wherein he says to the Virgin ter of the Lord, *And thy own soul a sword shall pierce*, in another epistle,‡ opy of which I have just now sent you, I have said what is my view on natter; and this, amongst other things, is your own view also (dixi quid videatur, quod etiam tibi inter cætera visum est). . . . We may believe that tribulation is signified under the word *sword*, by which her maternal was wounded with the feeling of sorrow." §

"The revealed account of our Lord's sufferings," writes Fr. rris, "must be made the basis upon which we form a concep- of our Lady's. When Catholics meditate upon the Passion, find certain things which without revelation they would be to attribute to the Creator. These then they may fairly ribute to the highest creature, without the least chance of g wrong. Hence, if fear, so far as it is a passion, and kept heck by the reason, can be ascribed to Christ, it may also be the same sense ascribed to Mary. Again, if doubt, so far as it a temptation only, and not a voluntary act of the reason, can ascribed to Christ, it is plain that it may in this sense be ibed to His Mother. Christ we know was in all respects pted like as we are, except so far as our temptations are the lt of sin, original or actual. Representations are placed by an before our minds in the hour of death which lead us to bt: therefore to say, they were placed before Christ's mind His agony, is only to say He was tempted in this like as we

* "Et illud, quod ad fidem omnium, salutiferum pietatis suæ sacramentum, ua divini ratione consilii sub hac voce consignans alii, designans), ut alii em delegaret pro matre habendam, et vice sua consolandam: atque illi im novum filium vice corporis sui traderet, immo, ut ita dixerim, gigneret."

† S. Paulinus, *Epist.* L. 17, 18, *Ad S. Augustin.* Patr. Lat. Tom. 61, 415.

‡ We have searched in vain for this other epistle.

§ S. August., *Ep.* 149 (alias 59), 33, Tom. 33, p. 644.

are.* To say the Blessed Virgin was overwhelmed with temptations to doubt, need not be a heterodox assertion, if a person only meant thereby, that she allowed Satan to approach her with all manner of representations which tended in that direction. She had power to fix her mind upon the arguments in favour of doubt with which the outward appearance of her Son then supplied her, and to allow Satan to represent them to her—yet power to say, Thus far shall ye go, and no farther, I allow Satan and my own imagination to hold these terrible doubts before me, but I do not allow my reason to consent to them, or adopt conclusions from them. Hence the language of Paulinus of Nola is perfectly reconcilable with the feelings of the present Church. Such language, or even stronger than this, might reasonably be expected before the existence of formal doctrinal statements upon the subject. It is not such language which need scandalise any one who has diligently considered what S. Paul has said of God the Son Himself in the days of His flesh. If inspired words of the Apostles and passages from the Fathers regarding Jesus Christ have been misinterpreted, the same happens with regard to some things they say of our Lady. They may be clumsily worded statements of a most important truth, *viz.*, that the passion of Mary was as near a copy of the Creator's Passion as was possible to a creature. Hence the revealed account of Our Lord's Passion may be the best possible clue to our Lady's compassion when the sword passed through her own soul." †

The same writer says later on: "Origen, Basil, Amphilochius, Chrysostom, Theophylact, and Cyril, all understand the sword spoken of by Simeon as the sword of doubt. Paulinus is perhaps the only clear Latin authority for this interpretation, though S. Austin also speaks of it. Such a strong and lasting tradition they may set aside who choose. After much reflection on it, it seems to me best, either to own that some unknown truth lies under it, or else to own that the *temptation* to doubt is spoken of in language better suited to the *sin* of doubt." ‡

Here we dissent from Fr. Morris, in his identifying the interpretation of S. Paulinus with that of Origen and those Fathers

* Sister Emerich in the beginning of this century had a series of visions of the Passion. In one of these our Saviour is thus exhibited to her: "L doubte et l'inquietude, qui précèdent le sacrifice dans l'homme qui se dévoue s'éveillèrent dans l'ame du Seigneur; il se fit cette terrible question: Que sera le profit de ce Sacrifice?" p. 141, ed. Gall.

† *Jesus Son of Mary*, vol. ii., p. 64. ‡ *Ib.* p. 275.

ho adopted his view. *They* represent Our Lady as actually oubting at the time of her Son's Passion, whereas S. Paulinus peaks of her, as voluntarily allowing the sword of sorrow to ierce her heart through and through, and choosing to turn away er mind from all such thoughts as would have given her con- lation and encouragement, that thus she might have a fuller are by her own compassion in the Passion of her Son. It is ain moreover from S. Augustine's reply that he understood S. aulinus to speak in the sense of *the sword* being one of sorrow d not of doubt, and that this was his own view also.

S. THEODOTUS OF ANCYRA.

"But what part had the divine Virgin Mother, worthy of all praise, in se things that were taking place? She wondered indeed and with reason the things that were being said, and kept them, together with those said fore, in her heart. To her now Simeon of set purpose speaks: O fair and nocent dove! O sacred tabernacle of our hope, wherein all sanctity and agnificence dwell, He to whom thou hast given birth—thou knowest it not *is set for the ruin and resurrection of many in Israel, and for a sign which ill be contradicted. And thy own soul a sword shall pierce, that out of many arts thoughts may be revealed.**

"But why, Old man, dost thou mingle bitter things with the glad? itherto *Light and glory* hast thou foretold; but now thou announcest *ruin*, d depictest a sword for the Mother of the Babe? Assuredly I do, says he: will be in their time, ruin to the unbelieving, resurrection to the faithful. . . Her virginal soul too will at times have torment from various thoughts ming in and going out. . . ."†

S. EUGYPTUS.

"With regard to what Simeon said to Our Lord's Virgin Mother (*Luke* ii.)—Since the words: *That out of many hearts thoughts may be revealed*, refer the manifestation of the plottings of the Jews, and the weakness of the sciples at the time of Our Lord's Passion; we may believe that in saying, *by own soul also a sword shall pierce*, he means by the sword, tribulation, hereby the soul of the Mother was wounded with affection of sorrow. Such as the sword in the mouth of the persecutors spoken of in the Psalm: *And sword in their mouth;* since they were those *sons of men whose teeth were apons and arrows, and their tongue a sharp sword.*‡ In the same way so the iron that pierced the soul of Joseph,§ seems to me to signify hard ibulation."||

S. LEONTIUS OF CYPRUS.

"And after the days of their purification according to the law Moses were accomplished."—*Luke* ii. 22.

* *Luke* ii. 34, 35.
† *Hom.* iv. *in Deip. et Simeon.* n. 13, Patr. Gr. Tom. 74, p. 1410.
‡ *Ps.* lviii. 8, lvi. 5. § *Ib.* civ. 18.
|| Cap. 207, Patr. Lat. Tom. 62, p. 868.

"That is, the purification of Mary and the Infant and of Joseph the supposed father. All amazed at these words I would thus address the venerable Luke: What is it thou sayest, O Blessed Luke. Thou seemest to have forgotten what thou hadst before written. For thy present speech is out of harmony with thy former words. Didst thou not represent the divine Gabriel in the Gospel as accosting the Mother of God and all-holy Virgin in these words: *The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee?* How comes it then that she who conceived by the Holy Ghost and the power of the Most High, and not according to the law of human conception, needs purification? Or, how is she who was filled by Him, who sanctifies all creation visible and invisible, not a sharer of the Holy Ghost? How, again, is she who was overshadowed by the power of the Most High, herself not full of all purity and sanctification? But the archangel's words that next follow are even yet more dread than those he had before spoken. *And therefore also the Holy which shall be born of thee, shall be called the Son of God.* Who then that had heard those former words, and hears thee now crying out, *After the days of their purification were accomplished*, will not with reason be astounded and call thee to account? For if the Holy Ghost filled the Virgin, and the power of the Most High overshadowed her, and that which was born of her is in truth Son of the Eternal God, and now too, by reason of the Incarnation is so called (*διὰ τὴν οἰκονομίαν κληθήσεται*), how shall she who has been made partner of the divine and consubstantial Trinity, be not only not lacking in sanctity and purity, but also not be the good advocate (*πρόξενος*) of sanctity and purity for all creation?

"What answer then does the Evangelist make? I have not forgotten, he says, my former words, nor are those I now utter out of accord with what I before spoke. For if the Divine Word had remained altogether in the heights of Deity, and had not voluntarily condescended to our lowliness, what I now say might well astonish you. But if, being God without body of flesh, for our sake He clothes Himself with a body animated by a rational and intellectual soul, from a maiden unwed; and dwells in a virginal womb, without being circumscribed,—He who fills all things—and is born in time, for the sake of those that are subject to time,—He who is more ancient than all times and ages, nay who rather is their Maker—and is folded in a Virgin Mother's arms, —He who has the Cherubim for throne—and flies from Herod to Egypt,—He who smote the first-born of Egypt, and sunk in the sea the tyrant Pharaoh—and is subject to His parents as a child,—He who has all things subject to Him. . . ."

"They carried Him to Jerusalem, to present Him to the Lord."—*v.* 22.

"Lo, He *who fills heaven and earth* * receives ministering help whereby He is borne from place to place. But to what Lord art thou hastening to present the Child, O all-holy Virgin? Thou didst hear plainly from Gabriel that it was the Son of God who should be conceived in thy womb. If then He is Son of God, how is He not beyond all doubt Lord also? I know, says the Blessed Virgin, that He is both Son of God and Lord, at once my Maker and Son,

* *Jer.* xxiii. 24.

whom I fold in my arms as infant for His love to men. But I hasten to present Him to Him concerning whom my forefather David sung in melody, saying, *The Lord said to my Lord, sit Thou on my right hand, until I make Thine enemies Thy footstool.** Behold the Father, Lord: behold also the Son, Lord, to whom these words were spoken. But though there are said to be two Lords, yet one is their Lordship, even as one also is their Godhead. I hasten then to present my Lord to that Lord, from whom, as regards the Godhead, neither was He, before He was conceived in my womb, nor is He now, nor will He ever be separated. Then the Evangelist continues:—

"As it is written in the law of the Lord: Every male opening the womb shall be called holy to the Lord."—*v.* 33.

"Well did my Maker and Lawgiver and Lord give a law concerning such male children as open the womb. But the Lawgiver is not subject to the laws: since too His generation without seed is above the order of human conception. For so far was He at His birth from opening the womb after the manner of others, that He left the gate of virginity closed, according to the words of the prophet Ezechiel: *And the Lord said to me: Son of man, this gate shall be shut. No one shall enter in, nor shall go out by it; and it shall be shut. . . .*" †

"And to offer a sacrifice . . . a pair of turtle doves or two young pigeons."—*v.* 24.

"The turtle doves signified the chaste prudence and the purity (*τὴν σωφροσύνην καὶ τὴν ἁγνειάν*) of the ever-Virgin and Mother of God: and the pigeons showed forth the ineffable clemency to usward, and the mystery of the conception by the HolyGhost (*τὴν ἐκΠνεύματος Ἁγίου οἰκονομίαν τῆς κυοφορίας*). . . .

"And His father and mother were wondering at those things which were spoken concerning Him."—*v.* 33.

"For though they were instructed, both Mary and Joseph, as to the mystery regarding the Babe: Mary by Gabriel: and not only so, but taught also by the Holy Ghost concerning the divinity of her Offspring, and Joseph by the Archangel when he said: *Fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her, is of the Holy Ghost:* ‡ although, I say, they had been divinely taught these things, yet struck with amazement *they wondered at those things which were spoken concerning Him.*" §

"And Simeon blessed them."—*v.* 34.

"With joy do we welcome this thy most fervent prompting of divine love, O Simeon. For though they were superior to all blessing, both the Mother that bore, and likewise the Babe, yet he offered it instead of doxology, in the same way as did the Three Children in Babylon. For they called not only on the angelic powers and all mankind, but also on irrational and inanimate creatures to bless God, and filled up their benediction, by blessing the Deity, as we read, with a canticle of praise. In this way then Simeon too on the present occasion *blessed them, and said to Mary His Mother.* . . .

"Why was it that Simeon did not speak his words of prophecy to the supposed father, but rather to Mary? Because, being full of the Spirit, he

* *Ps.* cix. 2. † *Ezech.* xliv. 2. ‡ *Matt* i. 20. § *v.* 50.

knew that Mary was true Mother of the Babe, whilst Joseph in mere name alone had the happiness of being called His father: and that from no human seed, but by the Holy Ghost, had the unwedded and holy Virgin conceived. For this cause, leaving him who was father by repute and name, he addresses his words to the true Mother, saying:—

"Behold this child is set for the fall, and for the resurrection of many in Israel, and for a sign which shall be contradicted."—*v.* 34.

"For the falling of unbelievers, but for the resurrection of the believing. Not as though the Child should Himself be the cause of falling to the former, and of resurrection to the latter, but by each one's own free choice, as may be shown certain by many proofs. . . .

"And thy own soul a sword shall pierce."—*v.* 35.

"The sword here mentioned is, I think, that proving that came upon the holy Virgin through the sorrow she had at the Cross. For it went through her scathlessly, as though in passage, without inflicting any grievous wound. (*διῆλθεν γὰρ αὐτὴν ἀβλαβῶς ὡς ἐν παρόδῳ, μὴ πλήξασα.*)

"That out of many hearts thoughts may be revealed."

"For the Lord's saving Passion revealed, by putting them to the proof, the thoughts of all. For those who firmly believed—though perhaps, as being men, they were shaken—yet did not despair altogether, since they expected the Saviour's resurrection; as for instance the women who came to the sepulchre and the holy disciples. But they who had their faith turned aside, being like those who sowed on rocky ground, and not enduring the heat of temptation, lost through pusillanimity even what little remaining faith they had left." *

HESYCHIUS.

"And when the days of their purification were accomplished according to the law of Moses," etc.

"Who are *they* here spoken of? As for Joseph, he was not the father, nor liable to purification, whilst neither Mary nor the Child had any need of purification. . . . So that Mary made the offering not for herself, but for all mankind. . . .

"But Joseph and His Mother hearing the words spoken by Simeon wondered."

"They wondered that Christ deigned to become Son of Man. Mary marvelled that a woman's womb had room for God, and that the handmaid had given birth to the Redeemer of the world.

"And Simeon said, This Child is set for the fall and for the resurrection of many in Israel, and for a sign that shall be contradicted."

* *Serm. in Simeonem*, Patr. Gr. Tom. 93, pp. 1567, 1579.

"For the falling of such as persevere in unbelief, for the rising of those who are converted from unbelief to faith. . . ."

"And thy own soul also a sword shall pierce, that out of many hearts thoughts may be revealed."

"Difference of opinion is called a sword, because as a sword cleaves and divides bodies, so also does difference of opinion cast souls hither and thither into doubt. For even though she was a virgin, yet was she a woman: and though Mother of God, yet of our lump. A sword therefore passed through her soul, that from many hearts might be revealed thoughts, *viz.*, divers opinions with regard to Christ at the time of His Passion. . . . For at the Passion of the Cross, all were sifted and tossed; not only the simple disciples, but also the elect, and even His Mother. This Passion confirmed the whole world." *

§ 4. Egypt—The Finding in the Temple—Nazareth.

S. CHRYSOSTOM.

"That it might be fulfilled which the Lord spoke by the Prophet saying: Out of Egypt have I called My Son."—*Matt.* ii. 15.

"See how the Evangelist brings in the words, *That it might be fulfilled*, to show that if he (Joseph) had not gone into Egypt, it would not have been fulfilled. Now this renders the Virgin herself glorious and illustrious in no ordinary way. For what the whole people had for a matter of praise, this was also so for the Virgin."

S. Chrysostom goes on to say that the people of Israel were used greatly to glory in their coming forth from Egypt of old, and that this same ground for glory belonged also to the Blessed Virgin. He shows how that descent and return of old was but a figure and type of the going down and return of the Holy Family; and that the subsequent sanctification of Egypt, which had its first commencements through this visit there of the Holy Family, was the real and peculiar prerogative, and subject of glory, for the Jewish people. The holy doctor hereby implies that in this prerogative the Blessed Virgin, who herself went down to Egypt with Our Lord, had the chief and first part.†

* *Serm.* vi. *In Præsentat. D. N. J. C. Ib.* pp. 1468-1477.

† *In Matt.* Hom. viii. n. 4. See *supra*, pp. 108-11, on *Is.* xix. 1.

"Behold Thy father and I have sought Thee sorrowing."—*Luke* ii. 48.

ORIGEN.

"In the company of the many my Jesus cannot be found. Learn where those who seek may find Him, that thou too, seeking with Joseph and Mary, mayest find Him. . . . Not without purpose is it written: *I and Thy father have sought Thee sorrowing.* He who seeks Jesus must not seek Him negligently, nor indolently, nor as though in passing, as some seek, and so cannot find Him. . . . I do not think that they sorrowed because they thought that the Boy had gone astray, or was lost. It could not be that Mary, who knew that she had conceived Him of the Holy Ghost, who had heard the Angel speak, and the shepherds running, and Simeon prophesying—feared lest she should lose Him through missing His way. . . . It could never be that Joseph was afraid that the Child was lost, whom he knew to be Divine. . . . They sought Him, then, in fear lest He had withdrawn from them, and left them to go elsewhere, and, as I am inclined to think, to return to heaven, thence to descend again, when it should please Him. Thus sorrowing they sought for the Son of God. . . . Where then do they find Him? In the Temple. For there the Son of God is found. Shouldst thou too seek the Son of God, seek first in the Temple; haste thither; there thou wilt find Christ, the Word and Wisdom, that is, the Son of God." *

S. AUGUSTINE.

"We must not pass over, Brethren, and chiefly for the instruction of the women our sisters, the modesty so holy of the Virgin Mary. She had given birth to Christ, the Angel had come to her, and had said to her, *Behold, thou shalt conceive . . . the Son of the Most High.* She had merited to give birth to the Son of the Most High, and yet was she the most humble. She did not set herself above her husband; nor did she so in order of name, so as to say, *I and Thy father;* but she says, *Thy father and I.* Thus she did not pay attention to the dignity of her womb, but had regard to the conjugal order. It was not the humble Christ who would have taught His Mother to be proud. She says, *Thy father and I,* because *the husband is the head of the wife.* † How much less, then, ought the rest of women to be proud. Mary, moreover, is called a woman, not from loss of virginity, but according to the way of speaking proper to her country." ‡

"Did you not know that I must be about My Father's business?"—*v.* 49.

"He thus speaks, because the Son of God was in the Temple of God. For that Temple was not Joseph's, but God's. He did not wish to be in such sense their son, as not to be understood to be the Son of God." §

"His Mother said to Him, Son, why hast Thou done so to us? behold Thy father and I have sought Thee sorrowing."

* *Hom.* xviii. et xix., *In Luc.* Tom. 13, pp. 1848-51.
† 1 *Cor.* xi. 3; *Eph.* v. 23.
‡ *Serm.* 51, 11.
§ *Serm.* 51, *De Concordia Matt. et Luc.*

"These words in their plain and natural sense are," writes Father Morris, "a reproof to Jesus: and would be a gentle or severe one, according to the tone in which they are pronounced. There seems no reason why they should not be taken in their plain and natural sense, because Our Lady really had authority over her Son, and had to keep the secret of His Incarnation close yet awhile. Hence she acted the part of a mother as naturally as she could, not because she mistook Jesus' conduct for something wrong, but because she had to keep up the appearance of being a humble and ordinary person. Her conduct, though capable of being misinterpreted, yet expressed before all present a great truth: it was a public expression of her authority over Jesus. This view is confirmed by her calling S. Joseph His father: for this is another expression which was false in the sense in which the audience, she knew very well, would take it, yet it expressed his authority also over Jesus, and the relation he bore to herself. Hence the Church uses this Gospel on the Feast of the Maternity of Mary: and hence S. Austin more than once observes that Our Lord made Himself in His human nature a little lower not than angels only, but also than Mary and Joseph, who were yet but travellers heavenward. She is inspired, as it were to use words especially calculated to let all men see that she had authority over our Saviour, and therefore if Jesus purposely furnished her with this opportunity of displaying her authority, this seeming act of disrespect [on His part] did but teach all generations why they were to call her blessed." *

S. AMBROSE.

"And He went down with them and came to Nazareth: and was subject to them."—*v.* 51.

"Honour thy parents because the Son of God honoured His. For thou hast read, *And He was subject to them.* If God was subject to poor slaves, how shouldst thou be subject to thy parents. Christ, then, honoured Joseph and Mary, not through debt of nature, but through duty of filial piety." †

* *Jesus the Son of Mary*, vol. ii., p. 27. In answer to Our Lady's detractors, we might parallel the words here addressed by her to her Divine Son with those words of His to her of seeming reproof at the marriage in Cana, and on another occasion (*Mark* iii. 31-35), and say that if His words implied any fault in her, equally would her words of expostulation and seeming reproach imply some fault in His conduct towards herself and S. Joseph. But this is impossible to hold.

† *In Luc.* Lib. viii. 74.

S. AUGUSTINE.

"According to *the form of a servant* * the Child Jesus was even less than His parents." †

S. JEROME.

"The Lord Jesus was subject to His parents, He honoured His Mother, whose Father He Himself was. He reverenced His nursing-father, whom He had Himself nourished, and was mindful that He had been Himself carried in the womb of another, and borne in another's arms. For this cause also He commends to the disciple that parent, whom before the time of His Cross He had never relinquished." ‡

S. EPIPHANIUS.

"And Jesus advanced in wisdom and age."—*v.* 52.

"It is written, *Jesus advanced in age and wisdom.* Yet is He the Wisdom of God, and in no need of wisdom. And again: *He emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant;* § yet His fulness was not thereby lessened. But [this is said], to show that He was emptied out from heaven into humanity, that is, into the workshop of Mary. For it is said: *Thy name is fragrant oil emptied out,* || it is not said poured out, but emptied out, *viz.*, from heaven to earth, and so from earth to Mary, in whose womb He was conceived and became flesh; from Mary to Bethlehem where He was born, from Bethlehem He passed to Nazareth, from Nazareth to Capharnaum, from Capharnaum to Jerusalem, and to the sea when He walked upon the waters, and to the parts of Tyre, and to Naim, and to Judæa and Jericho, and to Bethphage and Bethany, to the Temple of Jerusalem, and to the Mount of Olives and Gethsemane, to the house of Caiaphas, to the Pretorium and to Herod, to the place of Golgotha, to the sepulchre and even down to hell, to earth again after the resurrection, and then to heaven. For as sweet unguent that is emptied out from vessel to vessel, fills all the vessels with its perfume; so the presence of Christ, from heaven has sanctified the entire earth, that is, those who receive Him in truth. For He is the mountain of Daniel, and a great mountain; *the stone cut out without hands,* ¶ that is to say, wrought in mystery by no human generation. Little though it was, it is found to be exceeding great—that stone I mean, which took to itself greatness, and grew into a great mountain, a mountain not in one place only, but filling the whole world. Since He is Wisdom, and had become man, stretching forth His power over the universe, in order to fill the world with His grace, *He advanced in age and wisdom.* But being as He is the Wisdom of the Father, and He who teaches men to speak—for He it is who formed their tongue, and planted the ear in those who hear—how should He not know how to call 'Father or Mother,' before He carried off the might of Damascus, and the spoils of Samaria, and the rest? ** Had He however on His coming forth from the womb begun at once to speak, and been seen to utter words articulately like a full-grown child, His Incarnation and human birth would have been thought to have been unreal, and only in

* *Philip.* ii. 7.
† *Contr. Maximin.* c. 18.
‡ *Epist.* 117, n. 2.
§ *Philip.* ii. 7.
|| *Cant.* i. 2.
¶ *Dan.* ii. 55.
** *Is.* viii. 4.

appearance. For this reason it was that He bore with littleness of age that He might not obscure the truth of what was to follow." *

"The same is the Saviour, the Holy One, who coming down from heaven deigned to do the work of our salvation in a virginal workshop." †

§ 5. The Marriage Feast at Cana.—*John* ii. 1-11.

S. IRENÆUS.

"With Him nothing is incomplete or out of due season, just as with the Father there is nothing incongruous. For all these things were known by the Father; but the Son works them out at the proper time in perfect order and sequence. This was the reason why, when Mary was urging Him on to work the wonderful miracle of the wine, and was desirous before the time to partake of the cup of emblematical significance, ‡ the Lord checking her untimely haste, said *Woman, what is it to Me and to thee? My hour is not yet come*, waiting for that hour which was foreknown by the Father." §

S. EPHREM.

"Let Cana praise Thee, because Thou hast made glad her feast; and let the crown of the bridegroom exalt Thee, because Thou hast exalted him. In a mirror of parables is set forth and signified that the crown of his crowns is Thy triumph. In the spouse Thou hast figured Thy Church, in the guests Thy invited ones are denoted, in Thy triumph Thou hast prefigured Thy Advent.

"Let the feast praise Thee, because Thou hast multiplied its wines. Lo, the drinkers are astounded. Generous wines, made from water, have they drunk because they had invited the King. Of His own wines has He made them to drink. Blessed is He who there was fellow-guest, that, despising the beauty of the spouse, and looking, Lord, at Thee, he might see how beautiful Thou art.

"Amongst the invited I too will give thanks, that me He has refreshed with drink. The heavenly Bridegroom have I invited, who has abased Himself that He should invite. A fellow-guest I will enter to His banquet most pure: amongst the youths will I give thanks, because He Himself is the Bridegroom, and there is no one who has to knock at His bride-chamber door. His banquet, most wealthy, has no lack, as had that banquet which failed and was replenished by the Lord. . . ." ‖

* *Anacoratus*, 11. Patr. Gr. Tom. 43, p. 88.

† *Ib.*, p. 157.

‡ "*Participare compendii poculo, i.e.*, the cup which *recapitulates* the suffering of Christ, and which, as Harvey thinks, refers to the symbolical character of the Cup of the Eucharist, as setting forth the Passion of Christ." *Ante-Nicene Christian Library*, vol. v., p. 330.

§ S. Irenæus, *Hær.* iii. 7.

‖ Hymn xxxiv. *De Myst. D. N. J. C.* Lamy, vol ii., p. 881.

S. PAULINUS.

In an Epithalamium for Julian and Ia, S. Paulinus shows how the husband should be to the wife what Jesus Christ is to His Church: and that if such be the dispositions of the betrothed, Jesus will assist at the marriage, and again change the water into wine, and Mary the Lord's Virgin Mother will be present with the spouses—she who is the model of the Church, which is alike Sister and Spouse of the Lord, as well as Mother of all the faithful.*

S. AUGUSTINE.

"Christ has a bride here below whom He has redeemed with His blood, and to whom He has given the Holy Spirit as a pledge . . . whom He willed to take on rising again, whom He had already united to Himself in the Virgin's womb. For the Word was the Bridegroom, and human flesh the bride. The two natures form one only Son of God, one only Son of Man. The womb of the Virgin Mary, wherein He became Head of the Church, was His bridal chamber; thence *He came forth*, in the words of the Psalmist, *as a bridegroom from his chamber, and rejoiced as a giant to run his way*.† From this chamber, then, He went forth as a bridegroom; and being invited came to the marriage.

"It is because of an indubitable mystery, that He appears not to acknowledge His Mother, from whom as the Bridegroom He came forth, when He says to her: *Woman, what is it to Me and to thee? My hour is not yet come.* What is this? Did He come to the marriage for the purpose of teaching men to treat their mothers with contempt? Surely the man to whose marriage He had come was taking a wife with the view of having children; and he surely wished to be honoured by those children whom he should beget. Had Jesus, then, come to the marriage in order to dishonour His Mother, when marriages are celebrated and wives married with the view of having children, whom God commands to honour their parents? Beyond all doubt, brethren, there is some hidden mystery here. It is really a matter of such importance that some—against whom the Apostle has forewarned us to be on our guard, when he said: *I fear lest as the serpent seduced Eve by his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted and fall from the simplicity that is in Christ*‡—detracting from the Gospel, and asserting that Jesus was not born of the Virgin Mary, seek to draw from this place an argument in support of their error, saying, How could she be His Mother, to whom He said, *Woman, what is it to Me and to thee?* . . ."

The holy Doctor, after refuting these heretics at some length, thus continues:—

"Why then did He say to His Mother, *What is it to Me and to thee, Woman? My hour is not yet come.* We must here bear in mind that our Lord

* *Poem.* xxv., 142-175. P. L. Tom. 61, pp. 633-638.
† *Ps.* xviii. 6. ‡ 2 *Cor.* xi. 3.

Jesus Christ was both God and man. According as He was God, He had not a mother; according as He was man, He had. She was the Mother of His weakness, which He took for our sakes. But the miracle which He was about to work, was an act of His Divinity, not of His weakness; and this He would do as God, not as man born in weakness. *But the weakness of God is stronger than men.** His Mother then was asking a miracle, but He when about to do what was Divine, as it were, did not acknowledge the human womb, saying in effect, 'That of Me which works the miracle, thou didst not beget; for thou didst not beget My Divinity; but because thou didst beget My infirmity. I will acknowledge thee at the time when that same infirmity shall be hanging upon the Cross.' For this is the meaning of *My hour is not yet come.* Since then it was that He acknowledged her, whom in truth He had always known. He knew His Mother in predestination, even before He was born of her; even before He, as God, created her of whom, as man, He was Himself to be created, He knew her as His Mother. But until a certain hour, in a mystical sense, He did not acknowledge her; whilst at a certain hour, which had not yet come, again in a mystical sense, He does acknowledge her. For then did He acknowledge her, when that nature to which she gave birth was a-dying. For not that died whereby Mary was made, but that died which was made of Mary. There died not the eternity of the Divinity, but there died the weakness of the flesh. He therefore made that answer, to distinguish in the faith of believers, between the *Who*, and the *Hour*, He came. For while He was God and the Lord of heaven and earth, He came by a Mother who was a woman. In that He was Lord of the world, Lord of heaven and earth, He was, of course, the Lord of Mary also: but in that it is said, *Made of a woman, made under the law*,† He was Mary's Son. The same both the Lord of Mary and the Son of Mary; the same both the Creator of Mary and created from Mary. Marvel not that He was both Son and Lord. For just as He is called the Son of Mary, so likewise is He called the Son of David; and Son of David, because Son of Mary. Hear the Apostle openly declaring: *Who was made of the seed of David according to the flesh.*‡ Hear Him also declared the Lord of David: let David himself declare this: *The Lord said to my Lord, Sit Thou at My right hand.*§ And this same passage Jesus Himself brought forward to the Jews, and refuted them from it.‖ How then was He both David's Son, and David's Lord? David's Son according to the flesh, David's Lord according to His Divinity, so also Mary's Son after the flesh, and Mary's Lord after His Majesty. Now as she was not the Mother of His Divinity, whilst it was by His Divinity the miracle she asked for would be wrought, therefore He answered her, *What is it to Me and to thee, Woman?* But think not that I deny thee to be My Mother. *My hour is not yet come;* for in that hour I will acknowledge thee, when My weakness shall come to hang upon the Cross. Let us prove the truth of this. When the Lord was in His Passion, the same Evangelist tells us—he who knew the Mother of the Lord, and who has given us to know about her in this marriage feast,—the same, I say, tells us: *There was there near the cross the Mother of Jesus; and Jesus saith to His Mother, Woman, behold thy Son, and to the disciple, Behold thy Mother.*¶ He commends His Mother to the care of the disciple; commends His Mother,

* 1 *Cor.* i. 25. † *Gal.* iv. 4. ‡ *Rom.* i. 3.
§ *Ps.* cix. 1. ‖ *Matt.* xxii. 45. ¶ *John* xix. 25-27.

as about to die before her, and to rise again before her death. The man commends her a human being to man's care. To this humanity had Mary given birth. (Commendat homo homini hominem. Hoc pepererat Maria.) That hour had now come, the hour of which He had then said, *My hour is not yet come.*" *

S. Augustine in refuting certain heretics who denied that Mary was Our Lord's true Mother says :—

"We are not to deny Christ's Mother from what He said, *What to Me and to thee, woman? My hour is not yet come.* For He would thereby teach us that, as God, He had no mother, and was preparing, by changing the water into wine, to show forth the majesty of His Person. But when He was being crucified, it was as Man He was crucified. Hence, He, as though said to Mary: 'At that hour, which is not yet come, My Mother, I will acknowledge thee.' For then, when as Man He was crucified, He acknowledged His human Mother, and commended her with such great human affection to His best-beloved disciple.

"Nor should we be moved by the answer which He made when His Mother and brethren were announced to Him: *Who is My Mother, and who are My brethren?* etc. † Since these words are rather an instruction for such of us as are charged to preach the word of God to our brethren; as though He said, that we ought not to recognise our relations, should they be a hindrance to our ministry. But if any one supposes that Our Lord had not a Mother on earth because He said, *Who is My Mother?* he would have to deny that the Apostles had fathers on earth, because Our Lord bid them, *Call none your father upon earth: for one is your Father who is in heaven.* ‡

"By His miracles Christ won faith in Himself as God, who by nature He was; by His Passion faith in Himself as Man, whose nature He had assumed. Speaking to the multitudes as God, He (as though) denied His Mother when announced to Him: § and yet as the Gospel says, *The Child was subject to His parents.* || He showed Himself as God by His doctrines: and as Man by the successive ages of His life. When too He was about to change the water into wine, He spoke as God, 'Withdraw from Me, Woman' (Recede a me, Mulier). *What is it to Me and to thee? My hour is not yet come.* ¶ But when the hour was come wherein He should die, from the Cross, as Man, He acknowledged His Mother, and commended her to the disciple whom above all the rest He loved." **

"When on the Cross, He acknowledged His Mother, and commended her to His beloved disciple. Most fitly, then, did He show forth His human affection when He was dying as Man. That *hour had not yet come*, when, about to change the water into wine, He said to that same Mother, *What is it to Me and to thee, Woman? My hour is not yet come.* For it was not from Mary that He had taken what He had in His Divinity, whilst it was from Mary that He had taken what was then hanging upon the Cross." ††

* *In Joann.* Tract. viii. 4-9. † *Matt.* xii. 48.
‡ *Matt.* xxiii. 9, *De Fide et Symb.* c. vi. n. 9. § *Matt.* xii. 48.
|| *Luke* ii. 51. ¶ *John* ii. 4. ** *De Vera Religione*, c. xvi. n. 31.
†† *Serm.* 218, c. 10, *De Passione Domini*, (alias, *De Divers.* 76).

S. GAUDENTIUS.

"I should say that all this told for Mary's blessedness, when Christ called *woman* her who by divine child-bearing began to be a mother, expressly that she might abide a Virgin yet more holy. As to Our Lord's words, *What is it to Me and to thee? My hour is not yet come.* This answer of His does not seem to me to accord with Mary's suggestion, if we take it literally in its first apparent sense, and do not suppose our Lord to have spoken in mystery, meaning thereby that the wine of the Holy Ghost could not be given to the Gentiles before His Passion and Resurrection, as the Evangelist attests: *As yet the Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.* * With reason then, at the beginning of His miracles, did He thus answer His Mother; as though He said: 'Why this thy so hasty suggestion, O Woman? Since the hour of My Passion is not yet come when,—all powers whether of teaching or of divine operations being then completed—I have determined to die for the life of believers. After My passion and resurrection, when I shall return to the Father, there shall be given to them the wine of the Holy Ghost.' Whereupon she too, that most blessed one, knowing the profound mystery of this answer, understood that the suggestion she had just made was not slighted or spurned, but, in accordance with that spiritual reason, was for a time mysteriously delayed. Otherwise, she would never have said to the waiters, *Whatsoever He shall say to you, do ye;* and unless, full as she was of the Holy Ghost after her divine child-bearing, she not only knew the meaning of Christ's answer, but also foresaw the whole course of His making the water wine. † For what would be hidden from the Mother of Wisdom who was able to contain God, that vessel most worthy of so great power?"

"Having treated historically of the truth of what happened, let us now follow the figures that are spiritually proposed. As then you learnt about the bridegroom and the bride, the day and the days, the nuptials and the place, the failing of the wine, and what wine; so now take figuratively the Lord's Mother for the whole people of the holy patriarchs and prophets, and of all the just, whence, as we read in the Gospel, Our Lord derived the origin of our flesh. For it is there written, *The book of the generation of Jesus Christ the son of David, the son of Abraham,* and of all the rest who follow. ‡ This Our Lord's Mother then interceded (intercessit) for us Gentiles with the Eternal Son of God, her own Son too, according to the flesh, that she might give to us who were in need thereof the gladness of the heavenly wine."

The Saint then illustrates Mary's suggestion and her Son's answer to her, by what happened in the case of the woman of Canaan and His words then, *It is not meet to take the bread of the children and to cast it to the dogs;* § showing how in the end the dogs were received as children, and obtained the children's portion; and that all this was analogous to and prefigured by what

* *John* vii. 39.

† "Mensarum tunc inde vocat lætata ministros
Mater. . . ."—Juvencus, *Evang. Hist.*, L. ii., *vv.* 138, 9.

‡ *Matt.* i. 1-16. § *Matt.* xv. 22-28.

took place at the marriage feast, when "in our need the Mother of Christ fulfilled the office of pleading with Him in our behalf." *

"In saying, *If you loved Me, you would indeed be glad, because I go to the Father: for the Father is greater than I*,† He declares that for this very purpose will He ascend to heaven in the twofold substance of God and man, that He who, by reason of the humility of the Incarnation, seemed here on earth to be less than Himself, and therefore less than His Father—ascending as Conqueror to heaven, after having trodden down the sting of death—would ever remain equal to the Father, as He had always been; and He who was always God, and now is also man, would reign for ever as God, set in the eternal glory of the Father. For He who before, by way of image, from water made wine, when He said to most blessed Mary, *What is it to Me and to thee, Woman? My hour is not yet come*, the same, after the hour of His Passion, so far consummated the reality of the mystery which had gone before, that the water of the Incarnation became in truth the wine of the Divinity. Whilst heretics adulterating the word of God, still, so to say, mix water with the wine. Whereas the whole Lord Jesus—both what He is from God the Father, and also what He is from the Virgin Mother—is God the Only-begotten in the glory of God the Father; since God is not lessened in the Man, but the Man has His growth with God; that as *the Word was made flesh and dwelt in us*, so flesh might become God and dwell in the heavens." ‡

S. CHRYSOSTOM.

"Here we may reasonably ask, Whence it came into the mind of Our Lord's Mother to have so great thoughts about her Son; for as yet He had wrought no miracle, since *this was the beginning of miracles that Jesus did*."

S. Chrysostom goes on to show that Our Lord in His youth had done nothing to make Himself known, except what is recorded of Him when twelve years old in the Temple; and that had He acted otherwise, what He did would have been taken for a mere phantasm, and He might have been crucified before the time. He continues:—

"How then did His Mother conceive anything great of Him? He had already begun to reveal Himself, both from the beginning of John the Baptist, and also from what He had Himself said to His disciples. But before this, His conception and all that had occurred at His birth filled her with the greatest ideas of the Child. For she had heard *all things that had been spoken concerning the Child, and kept them in her heart*.§ Why then, you ask, did she not speak of these things before? Because, as I said, it was then only that He began to come out publicly. Before, He was living as one of the crowd; hence His Mother did not venture to speak to Him about anything of this kind. But when she heard that John had already come forward on His behalf, and openly borne such great testimony to Him, and that He now had

* *Serm.* ix. *De Evang. Lect. Secund.* P. L. Tom. 20, p. 900 sq.

† *John* xiv. 28.

‡ *Serm.* xix. *De divers. Capit. Nonus. Ib.* p. 990. § *Luke* ii. 17, 19, 51.

disciples, she at length took courage to ask Him, and on the wine failing, said, *They have no wine.* For she wished both to confer a favour on the company, and also to make herself more conspicuous by means of her Son. Perhaps too, she suffered something human, as did also His brethren when they said, *Show Thyself to the world,** wishing to reap glory from the miracle. For this cause also He answered her somewhat vehemently (σφοδρότερον). *What is it to Me and to thee, Woman? My hour is not yet come.* But that He exceedingly reverenced (σφόδρα ᾐδεῖτο) His Mother, hear Luke recording how He was subject to His parents,† and this same Evangelist (S. John) himself, who shows how He took care of her at the very hour of His crucifixion. For when parents do not hinder or forbid anything that pertains to God, it is necessary and right to yield; otherwise there is danger. For should they ask anything unreasonable, and hinder us in spiritual matters, it is not safe to obey them. Here therefore He thus answered; and again on another occasion, *Who is My mother, and who are My brethren?* ‡ For they had not yet a right opinion of Him. But because she had given Him birth, she made claim, as other mothers are wont to do, to command in all things Him whom she should obey and adore as Lord. Therefore He then gave that answer. For think what it was—when all the people, and the crowd were standing round Him, and the multitude listening to and hanging on His words as He was expounding His teaching—for her to have come in the midst, to take Him away from His discourse, that He might converse with her apart; and not to endure to come inside, but to draw Him out alone to herself. This is why He said, *Who is My mother and My brethren?* Not treating with contumely her who had given Him birth, God forbid: but doing her the greatest profit, and not allowing her to have mean thoughts of Himself. For if He had come for others, and did all things so as to give them a right idea of Himself, much more did He act thus in the case of His Mother. For since it was probable that on hearing this from her Son, even so, she would be loath to obey, but would be everywhere claiming for herself precedence as His Mother—He therefore gave this answer to those who spoke: for otherwise He would not have raised her from these lower sentiments to higher thoughts, if she were always expecting to be honoured by her Son, and not to regard Him as Lord. For this reason therefore He said, *What is it to Me and to thee, Woman?* And for another reason also not less necessary, *viz.*, that the miracles He worked might not fall under suspicion; seeing that they ought to be asked for by those who were in need of them, and not by His Mother. But why so? Because miracles, great though they may be, that are done at the request of relations, are often repugnant to the beholders; whereas when those who need them ask for them, the miracle is free from suspicion, the praise is sincere, and the utility great. . . . He made use therefore of a rebuke, saying, *What is it to Me and to thee, Woman?* teaching her in future not again to do the like. For whilst He had a care for the honour which He owed to His Mother, much more had He for her salvation in the spiritual order, and for the good of the many, for which cause He had taken flesh. These were not the words of one who was taking a high tone of authority (ἀπαυθαδιαζομένου) towards His Mother, but of much economy, whereby she was herself being disciplined (οἰκονομίας πολλῆς ῥυθμιζούσης αὐτὴν τε ἐκείνην), and which provided that the miracles should take place with all befitting decorum. For that He exceed-

* *John* vii. 4. † *Luke* ii. 51. ‡ *Mark* iii. 33.

ingly (σφόδρα) honoured her, besides other reasons, even this very seeming to speak rebukingly to her is a best proof. For by His indignation He showed that He exceedingly reverenced her. But how this was the case we shall say in the following discourse.

"With these reflections, when thou hearest a certain woman saying, *Blessed is the womb that bore Thee, and the paps that gave Thee suck*, and Our Lord answering, *Yea rather, blessed are they who do the will of My Father*,* consider these words as spoken with the same purport. For the answer is not that of one thrusting His Mother aside, but showing that her childbirth would profit her nothing unless she was exceedingly good and faithful. But if it profited Mary nothing, without virtue in the soul, that Christ was born of her; much less will it avail to profit us aught, that we have a father, or brother, or child, virtuous and noble-minded, if we ourselves are far from his virtue. . . ." †

"Let us not have high thoughts about our virtuous children unless we have the same virtue as they; nor of our noble parents unless we are like them. For it may happen that he who has begotten, is no father; and he who has not begotten, is a father. Hence when a certain woman said, *Blessed is the womb that bore Thee, and the paps that gave Thee suck*, Our Lord did not say, no womb bore Me, I sucked no paps, but, *Yea rather, blessed are they who do My Father's will*. Thou seest how He nowhere denies this natural relationship, but adds that affinity which is according to virtue. The Precursor too in saying, *Ye brood of vipers, think not to say, we have Abraham for our father*,‡ does not say that they are not naturally children of Abraham, but that this will profit them nothing unless they are akin to Abraham by their conduct." §

In his next Homily on the Marriage Feast S. Chrysostom brings together the various passages in which Christ speaks of *His hour*.‖ He then says that:—

"Christ was not subject to the necessity of times or hours, nor any way implied that He was so bound, because He said, *What is it to Me and to thee, Woman? My hour is not yet come*. But what Our Lord meant was that He does everything at its own proper time, and not all things at one time; thus with His Birth, His Resurrection, the Judgment; the creation first of man, then of woman; the interval between death and the resurrection; the Old Law and that of grace; so also as regards His making Himself known. He had as yet but two disciples, Andrew and Philip, and these did not know Him as they should, nor did even His Mother, nor His brethren, nor those present at the wedding—these last did not yet know that there was a want of wine."

"So He says, *My hour is not yet come*. I am not as yet known to those present, nor are they aware that the wine is failing. Let them feel this first. Nor should I hear this from thee, since thou art My Mother, and so wilt cause the miracle to be suspected. Those who are in the want ought first to come forward and supplicate. Not indeed that I have need of this, but that they may accept the miracle with full concurrence. For he who feels himself

* *Luke* xi. 27, 28.
† *In Joan.* Hom. xxi. (al. xx.) n. 1, 2, T. 8, p. 129.
‡ *Matt.* iii. 7, 9.
§ *In Matt.* (xii. 46-49), Hom. xliv. 2.
‖ *Mark* xiv. 35, 41; *Luke* xxii. 53; *John* vii. 30; viii. 20; xii. 23, 27; xiii. 1; xvii. 1.

to be in need, when he obtains what he asks, takes it as a great favour, whereas he who has no sense of need, will not have any such clear and definite appreciation of the benefit.

"But why, you ask, after saying, *My hour is not yet come*, and making a refusal, did He grant His Mother's request? In the first place, satisfactorily to convince gainsayers, and those who might suppose Him to be subject to some particular hour, that He was not subject to such hour. For how if He were so, though the proper hour had not yet come, could He do what He actually did? Then again, He acted thus to honour His Mother, that He might not seem to oppose her altogether; that He might not have the reputation (δόξαν) of weakness; that He might not put His Mother to confusion in presence of so many—and so she brought to Him the waiters. Just as after saying to the woman of Canaan, *It is not good to take the bread of the children and to cast it to the dogs*; and, *I am not sent but to the sheep that are lost of the house of Israel*,* yet moved by her importunity He healed the woman's daughter.

"From hence we learn, that even though we be unworthy, we may often, by our besieging (τῇ προσεδρείᾳ) render ourselves worthy to obtain. For this reason Mary, too, both stood her ground (παρέμενε), and also wisely brought on the waiters, so that the request might be that of more than one. For this reason also she added the words: *Whatsoever He shall say to you, do*; since she knew that the refusal came not from any want of power, but from unwillingness to show off, and to seem to rush all at once to the miracle. It was therefore she brought up the waiters." †

It will be noticed that S. Chrysostom in the foregoing extracts speaks somewhat disparagingly of Our Blessed Lady, attributing to her conduct in some instances, imperfection and fault. Here and there passages of the same tone are found in the writings of other Fathers also. Now we do not deny that this presents a difficulty.

We say then at once that it is very regrettable that such things were ever penned, since they lie as blemishes on the pages of these Fathers' works, who certainly would never have written what they have, had the teaching of the Catholic Church regarding the Blessed Virgin been as fully developed and clearly defined in their day as it was later on.

But such passages are very exceptional, and quite opposed to the general sense of the Fathers of the same period. Those who have thus presumed to pass aught of censure on Our Lady, are very few indeed compared with the vast majority, who, in their reverent and loving appreciation of Christ's holy Mother, would have shrunk from uttering any words regarding her, save such as would redound to her greater praise and honour.

We should note, moreover, that some of those same Fathers

* *Matt.* xv. 22-28. † *In Joan.* Hom. xxii. 1, 2.

who have at times spoken so strangely of the Blessed Virgin are inconsistent with themselves, since elsewhere in their writings they have highly extolled her, and expressed themselves in terms that might well hold with her entire sinlessness and perfect sanctity. Hence it is difficult to account for those hard passages that are found in their works. We would refer our readers to all that Cardinal Newman has said in his *Letter to Dr. Pusey* in explanation of the difficulty. And if we here offer any suggestions of our own on this matter, we do so with entire submission to more competent judgment.

First then, we incline to think, from incidental expressions in the writings of certain Fathers, that to deem Our Lady liable to some human weaknesses and imperfections, such as might amount even to indeliberate venial fault, would not have been incompatible in early ages with the belief of her exemption from original sin, or be held to detract from her fulness of grace and consummate sanctity. Such a view, on their part, may not perhaps accord with the more general teaching of later theologians: but we can hardly wonder at its being more or less current, at least in an implicit shape, before the Blessed Virgin's Conception, and her sanctity in general, had been formally proposed and discussed in the Church. We may add that the tradition of the Latin Church as to Our Lady's entire freedom from actual sin was uniformly more explicit than that of the Greeks.

Again, if hard things are said about Our Lady by certain Fathers which grate unpleasantly on our ears, they are to be found in their comments on passages in the Gospel, which themselves bear on their face more or less difficulty and obscurity, and, if read according to the letter only, may be interpreted to impart something of fault in the Blessed Virgin, and of censure on the part of her Divine Son. For ourselves, we can hardly conceive that any one should read for the first time, and unexplained, the narrative of the Finding in the Temple,* of the Marriage Feast at Cana, or the incident of Mary's desiring to speak to her Son as He was occupied with His public teaching, and not be struck by a certain tone of mysterious strangeness—not to say of something like coldness and harshness—in the words spoken by Our Lord on these occasions. We know, at any rate, that these passages of the Gospel have given a ready

* See the reflections of Fr. Morris on Mary's words to her Divine Son on that occasion *supra*, p. 167.

handle to detractors of Our Lady's praise, and are amongst those Scriptures spoken of by S. Peter, which—because hard to understand—the ignorant and unwary take in a wrong sense, and wrest too often to their own destruction.*

Devout and thoughtful Catholics, who look beneath the surface of the letter, and seek to discover the fuller and more hidden meaning of Scripture, according to the analogy and due proportion of the faith, will often recognise in the more obscure teaching and words of Our Lord, the employment of that economy of reserve, which we know He was wont to use on many occasions. Thus, when speaking before those who were unprepared to receive the full revelation of the truth, He proposed it but partially, or taught it less clearly and explicitly under the form of figure and parable, or in such terms as to be understood, indeed, by His more initiated disciples, but not by His hearers in general. And as it was only with much reserve and by degrees, according to seasonable opportunity of circumstance and time, that He made known His own Divine Person and character, so also did He act with regard to many mysteries of the faith, and in particular with all that related to the dignity and prerogatives of His Blessed Mother. He was, moreover, used to accommodate His manner of acting and His words, whether of approval or otherwise, to the various enlightenment, knowledge, and dispositions of those who addressed themselves to Him. There is, for example, somewhat of reprehension conveyed in those words: *Why callest thou Me good? None is good but one, that is God.*† Though to call Him good, was in itself praiseworthy, and according to truth, and would have been rather commended then censured by Him, had the address come from one who believed in His Divinity. It was also in accordance with the same economy that Our Lord spoke of Himself as ignorant of the last day.‡

The gist of our meaning in the foregoing remarks is, that the bare letter of Scripture represents often very partially by itself, its complete sense, and that in many cases the *prima facie* literal signification of a narrative, whether as a whole, or in part, or in some of its words, fails to impart that fuller and principal moral or instruction, which the inspired writers intended to convey. And the reason of this is, because both the narrative, and the

* 2 *Pet.* iii. 16.

† *Mark* x. 18. For the meaning and two readings of the text, see Maldonatus, and Cornel. a Lap. on *Matt.* xix. 16, 17.

‡ *Mark* xiii. 32.

language used to express it, were by a divine economy accommodated to the subjective state and circumstances of those to whom they were immediately addressed. In other words, beneath the more obvious and surface meaning contained in the letter, there is another sense conveying lessons of deeper import, and reflecting more fully the mind of Inspiration.

What we are here treating of is, however, not any mystical sense, but that which is really the full literal sense. Some likeness of analogy, indeed, though not of identity, may be found between this more extended literal sense, and the interpretation given by S. Augustine of the deception practised by Jacob, at the prompting of his mother, on his father Isaac.*

Here, though the holy Doctor asserts so positively that there was no real lie either of word or act in the case, we must understand him as purposely prescinding from the merely literal record of words and acts in the narrative, and fixing his view on the circumstances of the episode in its entirety, which he holds to be significative, in the mind of the Spirit, of deep mysteries of faith.† But such interpretation of Scripture is mystical, and in no sense literal.

And now to apply what we have been saying to those scriptural comments of certain Fathers, particularly S. Chrysostom, which reflect somewhat of dispraise on Our Blessed Lady.

With regard to S. Chrysostom, we know that his method of interpreting Scripture was eminently literal; not indeed always to the exclusion of the more recondite and mystical sense; but his bent, particularly when commenting on the narrative portions of Holy Writ, is to explain them in their literal meaning.

His tendency is, moreover, especially practical, leading him to draw out, almost at every turn, for the edification of the faithful, such moral lessons, as more obviously resulted from the text. To so great extent, indeed, does he do this, as, we own, not unfrequently to disappoint us, when having begun to explain some passage with beautiful reflections, and we are longing for more, he all at once breaks off, to revert to some rather trite and homely moral.

These two characteristics of S. Chrysostom's scriptural exegesis may, we think, account to some extent for those passages on the Blessed Virgin to which we refer. He makes use of the literal narrative, and the letter of Our Lord's words, apart from the

* *Gen.* xxvii. † S. Augustine, *Contra mendacium*, x. 4.

economy with which they were spoken, to draw from them moral teaching for the benefit of those whom He immediately addresses. In this supposition—for we do not put it forward for more than a hypothesis—the Saint's direct object is not so much to reflect upon Our Lady, as to point a moral; less to impart formal teaching concerning her as she is in herself, than to speak profitably about her for the improvement of others, as she is partially represented in language of accommodation on the page of the Gospel.

And even though there should appear something of coldness and dryness, or of a humiliating tone in the words addressed to His most Blessed Mother, or spoken by Him concerning her: - there is nothing in this to give any cause for marvel or difficulty, if we reflect that He was hereby exercising with wisdom His Divine economy before those who understood not the nature of His relations with her. She knew them herself too well, that any word of His to her, whether more reserved, or seemingly less tender —spoken for the uninitiated—could dim the knowledge that she had of all the ineffable love and filial reverence which He bore to her.

Or to take another view of Our Lord's words and conduct— What is there to hinder us from thinking that He, who, as the Apostle says, Himself *learned obedience from the things which He suffered*,* was, by thus making Himself strange to His beloved Mother,† with wise and gentle discipline, proving and training her in His own school of humility, thereby to increase the merits, and to render still more pure and holy the soul of her, whose perfect sanctification was above that of all others His life-long work, and the object most dear to His Sacred Heart?

We should not fail to note that in his criticism of Our Lady, the holy doctor is careful to qualify his disparaging remarks, by continually reminding us of the exceeding reverence and honour that Our Lord paid to His Blessed Mother, and says, that if He afterwards worked the miracle which He had first refused, it was to show honour to her before those who were present. He points out, moreover, that Our Lord in His words and manner of acting as regards His Mother was not taking a high tone of authority or in any way making little of her, but using much economy, thereby to preserve the dignity of His miracles, and to show that those who were in the need of them should themselves be the first to

* *Heb.* v. 8. † Compare 2 *Cor.* v. 16.

ask for them; and that He was not dependent on any *hour*, or circumstances of time or persons; and also at the same time to teach the people certain moral lessons. This economy, says the Saint, Our Divine Lord employed especially for the sake of His Mother, thereby to do her the greatest spiritual profit, as taking the greatest care of her sanctification, to lead her to higher thoughts and greater perfection. He adds—what at first sight may seem strange—"Besides other reasons; His very appearing to speak rebukingly to her is sufficient to show how exceedingly He honoured her: for by His indignation He evinced that He exceedingly reverenced her." *

S. MAXIMUS TAURENSIS.

"The Lord, then, on being invited, went to the nuptials: and it is the object of our instruction to show why the Son of the Virgin thus condescended. It was that we, taught by His example, should not deny that He is the Author of Marriage. The Son of God goes to the nuptials, that He may then sanctify by the benediction of His presence what He had of old instituted by His power. He goes to the nuptials of the Old Testament, in order to make for Himself a new spouse of perpetual virginity from the conversation of the Gentiles. To the nuptials He goes, whom no nuptials had created. He goes to the nuptials not to take delight in feastings, but that He might be known in a more striking manner. He goes to the nuptials not to take drink, but to give it; for when the wine failed the guests, the most blessed Mary said to Him, *They have no wine.* And Jesus answered her, as though displeased, *What is it to Me and to thee, Woman?* Who could doubt that these are the words of one displeased? And because, as I think, His Mother made unseasonably the suggestion of the failing of natural drink, to Him who had come to give to drink of the new chalice of eternal salvation to the nations of the entire world. For in saying, *My hour is not yet come,* He was in fact promising that most glorious hour of His Passion, or that wine of our redemption, which should avail for the life of all. For what Mary asked for, was of temporal favour, whilst what Christ was preparing, was of everlasting joy. But yet the most gracious Lord was not loath, when great things were coming, to grant small favours. So the venerable Mary—knowing beforehand in spirit, as Mother of the Lord, what would be, and foreseeing the Lord's will—carefully admonished the servants, saying, *Whatsoever He shall say to you, do.* The holy Mother knew verily that that rebuke of her Lord and Son, showed not offence of one who was angry, but bore in it the mystery of merciful compassion. Then the Lord—raising the honour of the chidden Mother, and revealing now His Majesty—said to the servants who were waiting, *Fill the vessels with water.* Without delay the obedient attendant did his duty. And, lo, on a sudden those waters began marvellously to receive strength, to take colour, to give forth odour, to have a new taste, and at once

* See *In Joan. Hom.* xxi. nn. 1, 2, Tom. 8, p. 129, *Hom.* xxii. *Ib.*, p. 133, *In Matt. Hom.* iii., iv. 47, v. 4, 5, Tom. 7.

to change their whole nature. This change of the water from itself to be another creature, testified to the power of the Creator present. For in truth no one could change water to other uses, but He who made it out of nothing. The servant then was amazed with astonishment, who had put in water and drew forth wine, and overjoyed that it was he who had brought those streams to their measures whereby the glory of God was revealed." *

S. CYRIL OF ALEXANDRIA.

"What is it to Me and to thee?"

"The Saviour shaped this expression excellently for us. For it was not fitting that He should come to action in a hurried way, or have the appearance of being a self-bidden wonder-worker; but it behoved Him to come to it with difficulty, as to a favour for the need's sake, rather than for the spectators'. For the obtaining of what people miss, appears more acceptable when it is not given to those who ask for it off-hand; but, by the intervention of a slight delay, is forced on into the fairest of expectations. But especially by this does Christ show, that the honour which is owed to parents is most worthy of account, undertaking, as He did, to do what He had no mind to do, out of reverence for His Mother. The woman then, having great influence towards the working of the miracle, prevailed, by persuading the Lord as her Son through decorum."

And again in speaking of the absurdity of supposing Divine Providence subjected to certain days and hours, he says:—

"I will also add another thing which very nearly slipped my memory altogether, though it bears a great deal on the subject in hand, or rather requires to be examined in the same fashion, though it is not hard to explain, but very easy *to him at least* who is at all intelligent, and has the senses of his mind practised for the distinguishing of good and evil. Well now, what is it about which we are speaking in these terms? The people of Cana were once celebrating a marriage. It was in Galilee nigh to Judæa. Now they invited to the banquet the Lord with His Mother, and the holy disciples. A marriage was the reason of their feasting: but when Our Lord, who ate with those collected there, was come to bless marriage of which He had given the law, wine failed them as they feasted. But the Mother, still using authority over her Son, owing to the exceeding submissiveness (διὰ τὴν πολλὴν ἄγαν ὑποταγήν) of our Saviour, and having also learnt from long experience His divine power and virtue, says, *They have no wine:* for she knew that He would accomplish, and that easily, what the nature of the circumstances required. But the Lord said to her, *What is it to Me and to thee, woman? My hour is not yet come.*"

S. Cyril then goes on to show how the miracle was done before the hour for doing it. "But," observes Fr. Morris after citing the above, "the passage given is enough to show how the doctor of the Incarnation thought Jesus felt towards His Mother." †

* *Hom.* xxiii. Patr. Lat. Tom. 57, p. 274.

† *Jesus the Son of Mary*, vol. ii., p. 39.

§ 6. Mary on Calvary.

ORIGEN.

"Whilst all the four Gospels, are, so to say, the elements of the Church's faith . . . I think that the flower of the Gospels is that according to S. John, which thou * hast proposed to me to investigate to the best of my ability. Such are my sentiments as I reflect on the Gospel beginning with the genealogy, and this without any genealogy. For Matthew, writing for the Hebrews who were looking forward to Him who should come from Abraham and David, says, *The book of the generation of Jesus Christ the son of David, the son of Abraham.*† And Mark, knowing what he is writing, says, *The beginning of the Gospel*,‡ perhaps because we may find its end in that of John, who speaks of *the Word in the beginning, as God the Word.*§ Whilst Luke, who says at the commencement of the Acts, *The former treatise I made of all things which Jesus began to do and to teach,*|| leaves the greater and more perfect discourses concerning Jesus for him who reclined on the breast of Jesus. For none of them has so clearly manifested His Divinity as John who represents Him saying: *I am the Light of the world: I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life: I am the Resurrection: I am the Door: I am the Good Shepherd:* and in the Apocalypse, I am the A and the Ω, the beginning and the end, the first and the last.¶ We may therefore venture to say that the flower of all the Scriptures are the Gospels, and the flower of the Gospels is that according to John, the sense of which no one is able to receive, who has not reclined upon the breast of Jesus, or who has not received from Jesus, Mary to be his Mother also. Yea, such and so great must he needs become, who is to be another John. Since like as was John, so he too must be shown to be Jesus, by Jesus. For, if in the judgment of those whose sentiments are sound concerning Mary, there be no Son of Mary save Jesus, and Jesus saith to His Mother, *Behold thy son*, and not, Behold he too is thy son,—it is the same as though He said, Behold, he is Jesus whom thou didst bring forth. For whosoever is perfect, himself no longer lives, but Christ lives in him: and since Christ lives in him, of him is it said to Mary, Behold thy son, Christ. How great understanding, then, do we not need, to be able to find out the word that lies hidden amongst the treasures covered over by the shell of the bare letter—that letter which every one who chances to see it may read, and which is heard by all who lend their bodily ears to hear it. But he who would properly understand, should be able to say with truth, *We have the mind of Christ, that we may know the things that are given us from God.*" **

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* Ambrose, a Gnostic of Alexandria, converted to Christianity by Origen, about 202. They contracted one with the other an intimate and lasting friendship.

† *Matt.* i. 1. ‡ *Mark* i. 1. § *John* i. 1. || *Acts* i. 1.

¶ *John* viii. 12, xiv. 6, xi. 25, x. 7, 9, 11; *Apoc.* i. 8, xxii. 13.

** 1 *Cor.* xii. 16. Origen, *Comment. in Joann.* T. 1, n. 6, Patr. Gr. T. 14, p. 29.

ANONYMOUS.

"From head to foot survey Me, deserted as I am and lifted up afar from My beloved Mother. Behold and see My locks all clotted with blood. . . ." *

S. HILARY OF POITIERS.

"Never would Our Lord at the time of His Passion have transferred Mary to the Apostle John to be his Mother by saying to them both, *Woman, behold thy son*, and to John, *Behold thy Mother*, unless He were leaving the charity of a son in the disciple for the solace of His now desolate Mother." †

S. CYRIL OF JERUSALEM.

"The Only-begotten Son of God, when He was dying, and His body was nailed to the Cross, seeing Mary His Mother according to the flesh, and John the best-beloved of His disciples, said to him, *Behold thy Mother*, and to Mary, *Behold thy son;* hereby clearly teaching the affectionate love that she should have for him. . . . In the same way that Mary was Mother of John, on account of her love for him (φιλοστοργίαν), and not because she gave him birth, so Joseph was called the father of Jesus." ‡

S. AMBROSE.

"*Mary the Lord's Mother stood before the Cross of her Son.*§ No one taught me this but S. John the Evangelist. Others have written of the world being shaken at Our Lord's Passion, of heaven overspread with darkness, that the sun shrank back, that the thief, after his pious confession was received to paradise.¶ But John has taught what the others did not teach, how when on the Cross He spoke words to His Mother; deeming it of greater account that the Conqueror of torments showed forth the duties of piety to His Mother, than that He made a grant of the heavenly kingdom. For if it was a religious act to grant pardon to the thief, it was one of much more abundant piety, for the Mother to be honoured by her Son with so great affection. *He saith to her: Behold thy son. After that, He saith to the disciple: Behold thy Mother.* Christ made His last testament from the Cross, and divided between His Mother and disciple the duties of piety. The Lord framed not only a public, but also a domestic testament, and this testament John signed, as a witness worthy of so great a testator. A good testament, not of money, but of life eternal; which was written not with ink, but by the Spirit of the Living God, who says, *My tongue is the pen of a scrivener that writeth swiftly.*||

"Nor was Mary less than befitted the Mother of Christ. When the Apostles were taking to flight, she was standing before the Cross, and gazing with pious eyes at the wounds of her Son, because she was then awaiting

* From a Poem by an uncertain author of the third or fourth century.—Ante-Nicene Christian Library, vol. xxii., p. 221.

† *Comment. in Matt.* cap. i. Tom. 9, p. 922.

‡ *Catech.* vii. 9, Patr. Gr. Tom. 33, p. 615.

§ *John* xix. 25. || *Matt.* xxvii. 45, 51.

¶ *Luke* xxiii. 42-45. ** *Ps.* xliv. 2.

not so much the death of her darling (pignoris), as the world's salvation. Or was it, because that regal court knew of the world's redemption through the death of her Son, that perhaps she thought she might add somewhat to the public good by her own death? But Jesus had no need of a helper for the redemption of all, He who preserved all without a helper. Whence too He says: *I am become as a man without help, free among the dead.** He accepted, indeed, the affection of a parent, but sought not another's help.

"Imitate, holy mothers, her who in the case of her most beloved only Son, showed so great an example of maternal virtue: for neither have you sweeter children [than He was to her], nor did the Virgin seek that solace which might give her another son." †

"The Mother stood, thinking less of her own perils than of showing proof of her maternal love. The Lord too hanging on the Cross, as one who wholly disregarded His own sufferings, made the commendation of His Mother with affection of filial piety. It was not for nothing that John has dwelt upon this in detail: for others have described how the earth was shaken. . . . Hence John, who had penetrated more deeply into divine mysteries, laboured, not without much profit, to make clear that she who had given birth to God remained a Virgin. Consequently, he alone teaches me, what others have not taught, how when on the Cross He spoke to His Mother—considering, as Conqueror of pains and torments, and Conqueror of the devil, that His apportioning the duties of filial piety was of greater importance than His making grant of the heavenly kingdom. For if the pardon bestowed on the thief by Our Lord was religious, much more religious was it that the Mother should be honoured by the Son.

"But let it not be thought contrary to the proper order, that I have written of the thief's pardon, before the address to the Mother: for since Jesus Christ was come to save sinners, it is not unreasonable that in my writings He should first fulfil the work that He had undertaken, by purchasing a sinner's salvation. In fact He Himself said, *Who is My Mother, and who are My brethren?* because *He had not come to call the just but sinners.*‡ But on that occasion it was according to circumstances of place and time: whilst here on the Cross not unmindful of His Mother, He addressed her, saying, *Behold thy son;* and to John, *Behold thy Mother.* Christ was making His testament on the Cross, and John was putting the seal to the testament. . . .§

"We have, then, here a Master of filial piety. The passage teaches us what the affection of mothers should imitate, and what the reverence of children should follow: that the former should sacrifice themselves in their children's dangers, whilst the latter should have more solicitude for their mothers, than grief at the pain of their own death." ||

"You witness indeed a painful funeral. But holy Mary, too, stood close to the Cross of her Son, and the Virgin gazed at the Passion of her only Child. I read of her standing, I read not of her weeping. Hence her Son said

* *Ps.* lxxxvii. 5, 6. † *Ep.* lxiii. 109-11, P. L. Tom. 16, pp. 1270-1.

‡ *Matt.* xi. 48, ix. 13.

§ Here is repeated almost verbatim, what follows to the end of the last quotation.

|| *Exposit. in Luc.* Lib. x. 129-132.

to her, *Woman, behold thy son, and to the disciple He said: Behold thy Mother*; bequeathing to them the inheritance of His charity and grace." *

"The Son of God when on the Cross commended the disciple to His Mother as her son, and delivered her to the disciple as his Mother.† This John has taught us, who was more given to write what is mystical. For whilst the other Evangelists described how in the Lord's Passion the earth quaked, the sun shrank away, pardon was granted to His persecutors,‡ the beloved of the Lord, who had drunk in from His breast secrets of wisdom, and the hidden things of His loving will, passing over what had been said by others, gave himself to establish of his own sentence the perseverance of maternal virginity, as though a son solicitous for the fair fame of his mother's purity, that no one might asperse her with contrary reproach.

"Meet indeed it was that He who gave pardon to the thief should place the purity of His own Mother beyond all question. And so He says to His Mother, *Woman, behold thy son. He saith also to the disciple: Behold thy Mother.* . . . Shut your mouths ye impious; open your ears ye pious; hear what Christ says. The Lord Jesus makes His testament from the Cross, and delays for a brief space the common salvation, that He may not leave His Mother unhonoured. The name of John is attached to the testament of Christ. To His Mother is bequeathed a vindication of her purity, in testimony of her spotlessness; and to the disciple is bequeathed the guardianship of His own Mother—the free gift (gratia) of filial piety. *And from that time the disciple took her to his own.* Herein, verily, Christ made no divorce. Mary left no husband. With whom else, indeed, was the Virgin to live, but with one, who, as heir to her Son, was, she knew, to be the guardian of her virginity?

"*The Mother stood before the Cross*, and whilst men were taking to flight, she stood intrepid. Think whether the Mother of Jesus could swerve from purity, she who swerved not from courage. She gazed with a mother's tenderness on the wounds of her Son, through whom, she knew, redemption was to be for all. There—a spectacle not unworthy of herself—stood the Mother who feared not the executioner. The Son was hanging on the Cross; the Mother was offering herself to His persecutors; and if in so doing her only thought was to be put to death before her Son, this affection of maternal love, too, would be worthy of praise, in that she was unwilling to survive her Son: but if it was rather to die together with Him, then was she longing to rise again with Him, for she was not ignorant of the mystery that she had given birth to one who should rise again. Knowing, moreover, as she did, that her Son's death was for the public good, she remained there in readiness, if haply by her own death too, something might accrue for the public benefit. But the Passion of Christ had no need of help, as the Lord had Himself long ago foretold: *And I looked, and there was no helper; and I considered, and there was no one to give aid; and therefore by Mine own arm will I deliver them.*§

"How then could her virginity be wrested from Mary, who, when apostles took to flight, feared not torments, but voluntarily exposed herself to perils?"

* *De Obitu Valent. Consolatio.* 39.
† *John* xix. 26, 27.
‡ *Matt.* xxvii. 51, *Luke* xxiii. 44, 34.
§ *Is.* lxiii. 5.
|| *De Inst. Virg.* Cap. vii. P. L. Tom. 16, p. 332, sq.

S. CHRYSOSTOM.

"When Christ was on the Cross, He commended His Mother to the disciple, teaching us up to His last breath to take all thoughtful care of our parents. When indeed His Mother troubled Him unseasonably, He said, *What is it to Me and to thee, Woman?* and, *Who is My Mother?* But here He shows forth the greatness of His tender affection, and commends her to the disciple whom He loved. . . . Jesus when commending His Mother to John, says, *Behold thy son.* O heavens, what honour! With how great honour did He honour the disciple; since, when He was Himself now going away, He delivered her to the disciple to take care of her. For since it was natural, that as a Mother, she should mourn and seek protection, becomingly does He entrust her to His beloved one (*τῷ ποθουμένῳ*). To him He says, *Behold thy Mother.* And these words He spoke, uniting them together in mutual love. This then, when the disciple understood, *he took her to his own.*"*

S. AUGUSTINE.

"Now there stood by the Cross of Jesus, His Mother, and His Mother's sister, Mary of Cleophas and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus therefore had seen His Mother and the disciple standing, whom He loved, He saith to His Mother: Woman, behold thy son. After that, He saith to the disciple: Behold thy Mother. And from that hour the disciple took her to his own."—*John* xix. 25-27.

"This verily was that hour whereof Jesus, when about to change the water into wine, had said to His Mother: *What is it to Me and to thee, Woman? My hour is not yet come.* This hour, therefore He had foretold, which at that time had not yet arrived, when, at the point of death, it should be His to acknowledge her, of whom He had been mortal-born. At that time therefore, when about to do things Divine, He had repelled, as one unknown, her who was the Mother not of His Divinity, but of His infirmity, but now, when He was in the midst of human sufferings, He commended with human affection her of whom He had been made man. For then, He who had created Mary became known in His power, but now that which Mary brought forth was hanging on the Cross.†

"A passage, therefore, of a moral character is here inserted. He does that Himself which He reminds us we ought to do, and the good Teacher instructs His disciples on the care that pious children should take of their parents; as if that tree whereto the members of Him who is dying are affixed, were the very pulpit from which the Master was imparting instruction. From this wholesome doctrine it was that the Apostle Paul had learned what he taught in turn, when he said: *But if any man have not care of his own, and especially of those of his house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.*‡ And what are so much home-concerns to any one, as parents to children, or children to parents? Of this most wholesome precept, therefore,

* *In Joan. Hom.* 85, 2, Tom. 8, p. 462.

† See also Serm. 218, *De Passione Domini, infra*, p. 172. ‡ 1 *Tim.* v. 8.

the very Master of the saints sets the example from Himself, when not as God for the handmaid whom He had created and was governing, but as Man for the Mother, whom He had created, and was now leaving behind, He provided in some measure another son in place of Himself. And why He did so, He indicates in the words that follow: for the Evangelist says, *And from that hour the disciple took her to his own*, speaking of himself. In this way, indeed, he usually refers to himself, as *the disciple whom Jesus loved*; Who certainly loved them all, but him beyond the others, and with a close familiarity, so that He even made him lean upon His bosom at supper;* in order, I believe, in this way to commend the more highly the divine excellence of this very Gospel, which He was thereafter to preach through his instrumentality.

"But what was this, *his own*, to which John took the Mother of the Lord? For he was not outside the circle of those who had said unto Him, *Behold, we have left all things, and have followed Thee.* No: but on that same occasion he had also heard the words, *Every one that hath left these things for My sake, shall receive an hundredfold as much in this life.*† That disciple, therefore, had an hundredfold more than he had cast away, whereunto to receive the Mother of Him who had graciously bestowed it all. Now it was in that society that the blessed John had received an hundredfold, wherein no one called anything his own, but *they had all things in common*; even as it is recorded in the Acts of the Apostles. For the Apostles were as if *having nothing, and yet possessing all things.*‡ How was it, then, that the disciple and servant received unto his own the Mother of his Lord and Master, where no one called anything his own? Or, seeing that we read a little further on in the same book, *For as many as were owners of lands or houses sold them, and brought the price of the things they sold, and laid it down before the feet of the Apostles. And distribution was made to every one according as he had need*,§ are we not to understand that distribution was made to this disciple of what was needful, in such sort that there was also added to it the portion of the blessed Mary, as if she were his mother; and ought we not rather so to take the words, *From that hour the disciple took her to his own*, in the sense that everything necessary for her was entrusted to his care? He received her, therefore, not unto his own lands, for he had none of his own; but to his own dutiful services, the discharge of which, by a special dispensation, was entrusted to himself." ||

S. JEROME.

"The Virgin's chastity was with best reason commended to the virgin John, preferably to the other disciples, that so Mary and John might have grateful society, and that so the sight of oneanother's modesty might be to each an ever-fresh source of joy, and enhance the happiness of their living together." ¶

* *John* xiii. 23. † *Matt.* xix. 27, 29.
‡ 2 *Cor.* vi. 10. § *Acts* iv. 34, 35.
|| *In Joan. Tract.* cxix. 1-3. See above on *Isa.* xix. 1, S. Ambrose, *Exhort. Virgin.* Cap. v. 31-33.
¶ *De Assumption.* Int. Opp. S. Hieron.

S. CYRIL OF ALEXANDRIA.

The Saint, after expressing sentiments with regard to Our Lord's Mother at the Cross very different from those of S. Ambrose and S. Augustine, says amongst other things as follows :—

"He took forethought for His Mother, as though paying no attention to the sharpness of His own passion ; for He was, even whilst suffering, without suffering. He delivers her, then, to the beloved disciple, namely, to John who wrote this book, and bids him take her home, and hold her in the place of mother ; and enjoins her in turn to look upon as none other than her very son, His own dear disciple, who was with carefulness and loving affection to fulfil the duties of a son by nature. But does Christ say this, as certain foolish persons have supposed, from love of flesh (*φιλοσαρκήσας*) ? Away with such wrong conceit (*τῆς δυσβουλίας*). For it fits those only who have lost their senses to fall into such absurdity. What useful lesson then did Christ here teach ? First, we say, He wished to confirm the precept of the Law : *Honour thy father and thy mother, that it may be well with thee.*" *

§ 7. Mary at the Resurrection.

S. Gregory Nazianzen,† S. Gregory of Nyssa‡ and Sedulius speak of the Blessed Virgin as having gone with the other women to the sepulchre on the morning of the Resurrection ; Sedulius writes thus :—

"Hoc luminis ortu
Virgo parens aliæque simul cum munere matres
Messis aromaticæ notum venere gementes
Ad tumulum, vacuumque vident jam corpore factum." §

Which may be thus rendered :—

"The Virgin Mother at first break of day,
And other matrons in her company,
Their harvest of sweet spices carrying,
Come mourning to the well-known sepulchre ;
And see it of the Body now bereft."

* *In Joannis Evang.* Lib. xii. in loc. Patr. Gr. T. 74, pp. 661-6.
† *Orat.* 42, 2, *De Resurrectione.* ‡ *Orat.* 3, *De Resurrect.*
§ *Carm. Paschale*, L. v. *vv.* 322-4.

But this view is contrary to the commonly received opinion. It is refuted by Suarez,* who contends from the authority of S. Ambrose and S. Augustine,† as also from the *Rationale Divini Officii*, and the Roman Church, which has for its *Station* on Easter Day, *Ad S. Mariam Majorem*, that Our Lord appeared first of all to His Blessed Mother. The words of S. Ambrose are :—

"Mary saw the Lord's Resurrection, and was the first to see, and believed. Mary Magdalene saw too, though still she wavered." ‡

S. Peter Chrysologus speaking of the resurrection of Lazarus says :—

"Martha is sent to Mary, because without Mary death could not be put to flight, nor life restored. Let Mary come, let her who bears the name of Mother come, that man may see that Christ dwelt in the secret abode of the Virgin's womb, to the end that the dead might come forth from hell, and the dead issue from their sepulchres." §

And speaking of Christ's resurrection the same holy doctor says :—

"Mary [Magdalene] came. This is the name of Christ's Mother. Thus, in the *name*, there came a Mother; there came a woman, to be the Mother of the living, who had become Mother of the dying, that it might be fulfilled what is written, *This is the Mother of the living.*" ||

S. AMBROSE.

"Let woman *make an offering of fine wheat flour*,¶ that is, of spiritual corn, or of that grain whereof it is said, that *unless it fall into the ground, it bringeth forth no fruit.*** Hence, too, it was that Mary †† first saw the mystery of the Lord's resurrection, and hastened to make known the tidings of holy salvation not everywhere to all, but to Peter and John only." ‡‡

"But Mary stood at the sepulchre without, weeping," etc.—*John* xx. 11-17.

"She who is without, weeps; for she who is within, knows not how to weep. Now she weeps because she sees not Christ's body, and supposes it is lost, because she does not herself see it. Therefore is Mary without. . . . She

* *De Mysteriis Vitæ Christi*, Disp. 49, Sect. 2.

† *Serm. in Sabbat. p. Pascha.*

‡ *De Virginitate*, c. 3, ad fin.—Sedulius affirms the same. *Carm. Paschale*, L. v. *vv.* 361-4, see *infra, Hymns.*

§ *Serm.* 64.

|| *Gen.* iii. 20. *Serm.* 74.

¶ *Gen.* xviii. 6.

** *John* xii. 24.

†† Here, of course, literally it is Mary Magdalene, according to *Mark* xvi. 9. Cf. *John* xx. 2, 14-18—but not without, we think, a mystical stress on the name of Mary.

‡‡ *De Abraham*, L. i. cap. v. 39.

who entered not in, wept, believed not, thought it was taken away by stealth; and not even when she beheld the angels, did she think she must believe. And so they say to her, *Woman, why weepest thou? Whom seekest thou?* This the angels say, and the Lord repeats afterwards the same words, that you may know that the angels' words are the Lord's commands.

"The Lord, then, also, as I have said, repeats the words: saying, *Woman, why weepest thou? Whom seekest thou?* She who believed not, is a woman, for whoso believes, rises again *unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the age of the fulness of Christ.** He says, *Woman.* The reproach is not on account of her sex, but her hesitation. And well *woman*, since she was wavering; for the Virgin had already believed (quia jam Virgo crediderat). *Thou weepest*, because thou dost not see Christ: believe, and thou shalt see. . . .

"Then says the Lord to her: *Mary*, look at Me. When she believes not, she is *woman;* when she begins to be converted, she is called *Mary*, that is, she receives the name of her, who brings forth Christ; for it is the soul that spiritually gives birth to Christ." †

This mystical use of the name of Mary by S. Chrysologus and S. Ambrose is employed also by S. Ephrem ‡ and S. Jerome. The latter Father represents Mary the sister of Aaron as personating the Blessed Virgin.

S. AUGUSTINE.

"As in the womb of the Virgin Mary no one was conceived before Our Lord, and no one after Him, so in the sepulchre there was no one buried before Him, and no one after Him." §

"Some people get so excited [about Christ passing through the shut doors], that they pretty nearly risk bringing the prejudices formed from their own reasonings against God's miracles. For they argue thus: If it was a body, if it were flesh and bones, if that which hung on the wood, rose from the sepulchre; how could it enter through closed doors? . . . You have one miracle, you see, in the Lord's conception. Hear also of one in His birth. A Virgin brought forth Christ, a Virgin she remained. Even then the Lord, before He rose again, was *born through closed doors.*" ||

"There is room here," writes Father Morris, "for reflecting whether the body of the Incarnate Word, thus the subject of such great miracle in His Conception and Birth, might not have exhibited itself in a glorified state upon His birthday to His Mother. With regard however to the state in which Our Lord's body appeared to the Blessed Virgin, it should be said that there is no clear tradition upon the subject. Origen mentions, not as an idea of his own, which in so fanciful a writer would be good

* *Ephes.* iv. 13.
† *De Virginitate*, cap. iv. 16-20.
‡ See *infra*, Ch. vi., *The B. V. and the Church*, and Ch. vii., *Intercession*, etc.
§ *In Joann.* Tract. cxix. n. 5.
|| *Serm.* 247, 2.

for nothing, but as a tradition, that Christ was transfigured several times in His life in the presence of those worthy of seeing Him in that state.* This assertion has been sometimes explained away by heretics, but, taken in its natural sense, it is not at variance with Catholic doctrine, and when viewed in connection with a rule regarding the Blessed Virgin, will make it credible that she enjoyed such a privilege at the Nativity. That rule is, that whatever gift God gave to any of His Saints, it is not incredible that He should give the same to His own Mother. Upon this view also, the following words of S. Ephrem are intelligible: 'How shall I bring to swaddling-clothes, One wrapped round with glory-rays?' These words he puts in our Lady's mouth at the Nativity, and they seem scarcely capable of bearing any other plain meaning."†

"It is plain from a passage of S. Cyril on the Transfiguration that he looked upon the glory of Christ's body as something inherent in it from the first, but miraculously veiled from ordinary eyes, because that glory could not be borne by them. . . His body at all times was capable of adoration, because at all times one with God. He did not by His resurrection confer upon the flesh a capacity for being adored which it had not before, but took from it the capacity for suffering. As Adam in paradise was able not to sin, but not as yet not able to sin; so the flesh of Christ on earth was able not to suffer, but not as yet not able to suffer."‡

FROM THE BOOK OF JOHN, CONCERNING THE FALLING ASLEEP OF MARY.

"As the all-holy glorious Mother of God and ever-Virgin Mary, as was her wont, was going to the holy tomb of Our Lord to burn incense, and bending her holy knees, she was importunate that Christ our God who had been born of her, should return to her. And the Jews, seeing her lingering by the divine sepulchre, came to the chief priests, saying: Mary goes every day to the tomb. And the chief priests, having summoned the guards, set by them not to allow any one to pray at the holy sepulchre, inquired about her, whether in truth it were so. And the guards answered and said that they had seen no such thing, God having not allowed them to see her when there. And on one of the days, it being the Preparation, the holy Mary, as was her wont, came to the sepulchre; and while she was praying, it came to pass that the heavens were opened, and the archangel Gabriel came down to her and said: Hail,

* See Ben. ad Orig. Tom. xii. *in Matt.* 35.

† *Jesus the Son of Mary*, vol. i. p. 422. ‡ *Ib.*, p. 218.

thou that didst bring forth Christ our God! Thy prayer having come through to the heavens to Him who was born of thee, has been accepted; and from this time, according to thy request, thou having left the world, shalt go to the heavenly places to thy Son, into the true and everlasting life," etc.*

In a fragment of an anonymous Syriac work on the Blessed Virgin of the fifth or sixth century we read:—

". . . Marath (my Lady) Mary went out from her house and went to the sepulchre of Christ; because every day she used to go and weep there. But the Jews immediately after the death of Christ seized the sepulchre, and heaped great stones at the door of it. And over the sepulchre and Golgotha they set guards, and commanded them, that if any one should go and pray at the sepulchre or at Golgotha, he should immediately be put to death. And the Jews took away the Cross of Our Lord, and those two other crosses, and that spear with which Our Saviour was struck, and those nails which they drove into His hands and into His feet, and those robes of mockery in which He had been clad; and they hid them: lest, as they said, any one of the kings or of the chief persons should come and inquire concerning the putting to death of Christ.

"And the guards went in and said to the priests, Mary cometh in the evening and in the morning, and prayeth there. And there was a commotion in Jerusalem on account of Marath Mary. And the priests went to the judge, and said to him: My Lord, send and command Mary that she go not to pray at the sepulchre, and at Golgotha. . . ." †

§ 8. Exegesis on some other Passages of the New Testament.

Matt. xii. 46-50; *Mark* iii. 31-35; *Luke* viii. 19-21; xi. 27, 28.

TERTULLIAN.

"When there is dispute about the birth of Christ, those who reject it as prejudging the question of the reality of His flesh, rest their denial that God was born, on those words of His: *Who is My Mother, and who are My brethren?* ‡ . . . Now what was the reason for this reply, denying for the moment His

* *Apocryphal Gospels*, etc., Ante-Nicene Christian Library, vol. xvi. p. 504. To the Greek text of *De Dormitione Mariæ*, edited by Tichendorf for the first time, he assigns a date certainly not later than the fourth century.

† *Syriac documents concerning Edessa; Abgar, and Addæus*, Ante-Nic. Christian Library, vol. xx. p. 133. The chapter has for its heading: The departure of Marath Mary from the world.

‡ *Matt.* xii. 48.

Mother and His brethren, Apelles too may learn. The Lord's brethren had not believed in Him, as we know from the Gospel, which was before Marcion's time. His Mother, in like manner, is not shown to have adhered to Him, whereas Martha and another Mary * were frequently in His company. By this, in fine, their unbelief is apparent. Whilst He was teaching the way of life, preaching the kingdom of God, occupied in curing sicknesses and evils, when strangers were fixedly intent upon Him, then those who were so nearly related to Him were absent.† At last they come up, and stand outside the door, taking no account, forsooth, of what was going on inside, nor do they, at least, wait—just as though they were bringing some matter of greater urgency than the business in which He was then specially engaged but, what is more, they interrupt Him, and wish to call Him off from so great a work.

"Now I ask you, Apelles, or you Marcion, if perchance you were playing at draughts, or disputing about actors or charioteers, and were called away by such a message, would you not have said, Who is my mother, and who are my brethren?. And whilst Christ was preaching and setting forth God, fulfilling the Law and the Prophets, dispersing the darkness of so many past ages, did He without just cause make use of these words, to strike at the unbelief of those who stood without, or to shake off the importunity of those who were calling Him away from His work?" ‡

S. CHRYSOSTOM.

"*Blessed is the womb that bore Thee, and the paps that gave Thee suck. But He said: Yea rather, blessed are they who hear the word of God and keep it.* When the woman cried out saying, *Blessed is the womb that bore Thee*, He did not say, She is not My Mother, but, If she wishes to be blessed, let her do the will of My Father. For such a one is at once brother, sister, and mother. O heavens, what honour! O heavens, what virtue! To what a pinnacle does He lead him up who goes after her (*εἰς ὕσην ἄναγει κορύφην τὸν μετιόντα αὐτήν*). How many women have pronounced that Holy Virgin, and her womb, blessed, and wished to be, in a sense, such like mothers, and to give up all besides. What then hinders? See, He has cut out a broad road for

* The other reading is, Marthas and other Marys.

† "That *His Mother did not adhere to Him* may mean that she was not in constant attendance at His preachings, some of which Martha and Mary are recorded as hearing. This, it is true, is not shown (non demonstratur) in the Gospels. What follows about *their unbelief* must refer to our Lord's brethren, not to His Mother. If Tertullian meant otherwise, he must for the moment have been dreaming; for in this same treatise (n. 17) he speaks emphatically of Mary's faith: 'Eve had believed the serpent: Mary believed Gabriel. The fault which the one committed by her believing, the other by her believing has blotted out'" (note of Editor). But in the Gospel itself a greater testimony is borne to Mary's faith than any Tertullian could give. *Blessed art thou that hast believed*, etc. And of her the Evangelist bears witness, that she *kept God's word, pondering it in her heart*, and fulfilling it. Consequently she shared pre-eminently in the blessing pronounced by her Son on those *who hear the word of God and keep it.*

‡ *De Carne Christi*, n. 7. Patr. Lat. Tom. 2, p. 766. See also *Adv. Marcion.* iv. 19, *Ib.* p. 405.

us; and it is in the power, not of women only, but of men also, to have their place in such an order, nay in one yet more excellent. For this does much more to make a mother, than her childbirth. And so, if that is blessed, much more is this, in that it is much more excellent (ὅσῳ καὶ κυριώτερον). Do not then merely desire, but also go the way to what thou desirest, with all the more diligence." *

"When Christ had spoken these words, He went forth from the house.† Seest thou not how here He both gave rebuke, and did what they desired? It was just in the same way that He acted at the Nuptials; for there too He rebuked His Mother asking unseasonably, and yet did not refuse her request; at first correcting the weakness, and afterwards showing kindness (εὐνοίαν) to His Mother. So here too He healed the disease of vain-glory, and rendered the honour that was befitting to His Mother, even though she was asking things unseasonable." ‡

S. Chrysostom here seems to suppose that the Blessed Virgin desired to ask Our Lord to come forth from the house where He was then teaching—which was crowded and thronged even outside the doors§—and preach to the people outside, who were gathered together in very great multitudes on the shore of the Lake, and were eagerly expecting to hear Him.‖ For the holy doctor observes that Our Lord's mode of acting was like that at Cana: He answers in tones of rebuke, and yet shows due honour to His Mother by granting her request. For says the Saint: "When Christ had spoken these words, He went forth from the house." S. Matthew accords with this view: *The same day Jesus going out of the house, sat by the sea-side*, etc.¶ It is thus remarkable, at least as a coincidence, that as Our Lord inaugurated His course of Miracles at the prayer of His holy Mother, so also did He begin His great teaching by Parables at her prayer, and with circumstances so similar in either case.

S. AMBROSE.

"*My Mother and My brethren are they who hear the word of God and keep it.* The Teacher of morals, who proposes Himself as an example to others, and is Himself the preceptor, is also the executor of His own precepts. For, before enjoining on others that he who leaves not his father and mother is not worthy of the Son of God, He first in His own person subjects Himself to this sentence; not however that thereby He renounces the duty of filial piety to His Mother; since it is His own command: *He who honoureth not his father or mother shall die the death;*** but because He knows that He owes more to the Mysteries of His

* *In Matt.* Hom. 44, 2.
† See *Matt.* xii. 46, xiii. 1.
‡ *Ibid.*
§ *Mark* iii. 20; *Luke* viii. 19.
‖ *Matt.* xiii. 2; *Mark* iv. 2; *Luke* viii. 4.
¶ *Matt.* xiii. 1-3.
** *Exod.* xx. 12, xxi. 15; *Deut.* xxvii. 16.

Father than to affection towards His Mother. Herein, moreover, there is no wrongful forsaking of parents; but spiritual relationships are taught to be more religious than corporal ones. . . . And let no one suppose that there is here any offence against that filial piety which the Law prescribes; for if a man is to leave father and mother, and to *cleave to his wife, and they are to be two in one flesh*, rightly is this sacrament observed in Christ and the Church.* He could not therefore prefer parents to His own (mystical) body. Here then the Mother is not denied (as certain heretics would artfully make out), for she is acknowledged even from the Cross; but the pattern (forma) of heavenly prescriptions is preferred to ties of flesh. Moreover, there is nothing repugnant in this interpretation; for He is showing, under the figure of His relations, that the Church which believes, is preferred to the Jews, of whom is Christ according to the flesh."†

S. JEROME.

"Whilst the Lord was engaged in the ministry of the word, teaching and preaching to the people, His Mother and brethren came, and, standing without, desired to speak to Him. Some one then told our Saviour that they were outside and asking for Him. He who brought the message does not seem to me to have done so casually and with simplicity, but to have been laying snares for our Saviour, to see whether He would prefer flesh and blood to His spiritual work. And hence the Lord would not deign to go out—not meaning thereby to disown His Mother and brethren, but to make answer to the plotter. So, stretching His hand over His disciples, He said, *Behold My Mother*, etc. These are My Mother, who give birth to Me daily in the hearts of believers. These are My brethren, who do the works of My Father. Hereby however He did not, as Marcion and Manichæus assert, disown His Mother,‡ that He might be thought to have been born of phantasm; but preferred His Apostles to His kindred, in order that we too may prefer, when there is question of rival love, the spirit to the flesh. . . .

"We may put it also in another way. The Saviour is speaking to the multitudes, instructing the nations inside. His Mother and brethren, that is to say, the Synagogue and people of the Jews are standing outside desiring to enter in, and are indignant at His discourse. When they have asked, and sought, and sent a message, they will receive for answer, that they have their own free choice, and can enter if they will, and believe in Him: and yet they will not be able to enter, unless they ask others.

"*The same day Jesus going out of the house, sat by the sea-side. And great multitudes were gathered together unto Him, so that He went into a ship and sat; and all the multitudes stood on the shore* (xiii. 1, 2). The people were not able to enter into the house of Jesus, and could not be present when the Apostles were hearing mysteries: for this cause the merciful and compassionate Lord goes forth from His house, and sits by the sea of this world, that the great multitudes may gather together to Him, and hear on the shore what they did not merit to hear inside. . . ."§

* *Eph.* v. 31, 32. † *Expos. in Luc.* Lib. vi. 36-38.

‡ "Since Mary was proclaimed Blessed by the Holy Ghost, how was it possible that our Saviour should disown her?" Origen, *In Luc.* Hom. vi.

§ *Comment. in Matt.*, in loc.

"Different were the benedictions of the Old Law from those of the New. Eve brought forth in sorrow. But since a Virgin has been Mother, and has given to the world *the Mighty God, the Prince of the world to come*, the old curse is destroyed. Death came by Eve, life comes by Mary. And henceforth, inaugurated by a woman, the gift of virginity has been communicated to women with greater abundance. The Son of God, moreover, on coming into the world, made for Himself a family apart, and as He had angels for adorers in heaven, He willed to have also angels for servants on earth. Then for the first time were heard those words: *If any man will follow Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.* Propose then to thyself the example of the Blessed Virgin Mary, who, by her admirable purity, merited to be Mother of God: and thou also canst become mother of God. For thou knowest that He said: *Behold My mother and My brethren.* Form His image in thy soul, grave it as though with a stylet in the depth of thy heart: purified and renewed, thou art His mother. And then, when He shall have grown up in thee, and thou hast stripped thyself of, and attached to the Cross, all opposing powers, by a new prodigy thou wilt become His spouse. Great labour, but also great recompense." *

S. AUGUSTINE.

"More blessed, then, was Mary in receiving the faith of Christ, than in conceiving the flesh of Christ. For to her who said, *Blessed is the womb that bore Thee, and the paps that gave Thee suck*, He Himself made answer, *Yea rather, blessed are they who hear the word of God and keep it.* What in fact did it profit His brethren, that is, His kinsmen according to the flesh, who believed not in Him, their relationship? So too, even the near relationship of Mother would have profited Mary nothing, had she not also more blessedly borne Christ in her heart than in her flesh.

"Her virginity itself too was the more pleasing and acceptable from the fact that Christ, in His conception, did not forestall it, with the view of preserving it against any one who should violate it. But before He was conceived, He made choice of it when already it was dedicated to God, that from it He might be born. This is clear from Mary's own words in her answer to the Angel on his announcing to her a Son. *How*, she says, *shall this be done, since I know not man?* For she surely would not have spoken thus, if she had not before vowed herself a virgin to God. But because the customs of the Israelites were as yet opposed to this, she was espoused to a just man who, far from seeking to take away, would on the contrary most jealously guard, what she had vowed to God. And even though she had said, *How shall this be done?* she would not have added, *Since I know not man.* For she certainly would not have asked how a woman was to give birth to a son that was promised her, were she a married woman in the ordinary way. She might, it is true, have been commanded to remain always a Virgin, that in her, as such, the Son of God might take the form of a servant with befitting miracle; but as she was to be the example to holy virgins—lest it should be thought enough for her to be simply virgin in order to merit to conceive

* *Ep.* 18 *ad Eustoch.* See also *Ep.* 97 *ad Demetriadem*, and *Ep.* 30 *ad Eustoch.*

offspring in her maiden state—she consecrated her virginity to God whilst yet in ignorance of what she was to conceive, in order that there might be made by means of vow, an imitation in earthly and mortal body of the heavenly life, and *that*, not through any precept, but through loving choice, and no service of obligation. In this way Christ—by being born of a Virgin, who before she knew who was to be born of her had determined to remain a Virgin—preferred to recommend holy virginity rather than command it. And thus even in the very woman in whom He took the form of a servant, did He will that virginity should be free.

"There is no reason then why virgins of God should be sad, because they too cannot, preserving their virginity, be mothers of flesh. For virginity could befittingly bring forth Him only, who could have no father in His birth. Nevertheless that childbirth of one holy Virgin is the glory of all holy virgins. And they, too, are with Mary mothers of Christ, if they do His Father's will. For in this even Mary is with greater praise and blessedness Christ's Mother, according to the above-mentioned sentence: *Whoso doth the will of My Father who is in heaven, the same is My brother, and sister, and mother.* All these relationships to Himself He sets forth spiritually in the people whom He has redeemed. He has as brethren and sisters, holy men and holy women, since these are co-heirs with Him in the heavenly inheritance. The whole Church is His mother, because she it is who brings forth His members, that is, His faithful by the grace of God. His mother too is every pious soul that does His Father's will by means of charity, which is most fruitful in those to whom it * gives birth, until Christ be formed in them.† Hence Mary, in doing the will of God, is corporally only Christ's Mother, but spiritually both sister and mother.

"Hence it follows that this One Woman alone, is not only in spirit, but also in body, both Mother and Virgin. Yet Mother in spirit she is, not indeed of our Head which is the Saviour Himself, of whom rather she is spiritually born—because all who believe in Him, amongst whom she too is, are rightly called children of the Bridegroom—but clearly Mother of His members, which we are, since she co-operated by her charity that the faithful should be born in the Church; and these are members of that Head. But corporally she is Mother of the Head Himself. For it behoved our Head, for a signal miracle, to be born according to the flesh of a Virgin; whereby He would signify that His members should be born according to the spirit of a virgin Church. Mary therefore alone is Mother and Virgin both in spirit and body, both Mother of Christ and Virgin of Christ; whereas the Church in the saints who shall possess God's kingdom, in spirit, indeed, is, as a whole, Christ's mother, and, as a whole, Christ's virgin; whilst in body she is not so, as a whole; but in some the virgin of Christ, and in some mother, but not of Christ. That is to say, both married women amongst the faithful, and virgins consecrated to God, by holy living, and charity, from a pure heart, and good conscience, and faith unfeigned,‡ because they do the will of the Father, are spiritually mothers of Christ. But as to what they give birth to in conjugal life, they give not birth to Christ, but to Adam—and for this reason they run [to the

* Or perhaps it is, "to whom the Church"—just before mentioned—"gives birth." Fecundissima caritate, in iis quos parturit, donec, etc.

† *Gal.* iv. 15. ‡ 1 *Tim.* i. 5.

Church] that by the ministration of the Sacraments their offspring may be made members of Christ, since well they know what they have brought forth." *

"In a certain place when Christ was informed that His Mother and His brethren were standing without, at the time He was speaking to His disciples, He said: *Who is My mother, or who are My brethren? And stretching out His hand over His disciples, He said: These are My brethren:* and; *Whosoever shall do the will of My Father, the same is My mother, and brother, and sister;* therefore also Mary, because she did the will of the Father. What the Lord magnified in her was, that she did the will of the Father, and not because flesh gave birth to flesh. Give good heed, beloved. Moreover, when the Lord was being held in admiration by the multitude, as He was doing signs and wonders, and showing forth what lay concealed under the flesh, certain admiring souls said: *Happy is the womb that bore Thee: and He said, Yea, rather, happy are they that hear the word of God, and keep it.* That is to say, even My Mother, whom ye have called happy, is happy in that she keeps the word of God: not because in her *the Word was made flesh, and dwelt in us;* but because she keeps that same Word of God whereby she was made, and which in her was made flesh." †

S. MAXIMUS.

"And his garment became shining and exceeding white as snow, so as no fuller upon earth can make white."—*Mark* ix. 2.

"The garment of Christ, then, is praised because it was shining, not by its texture, but by grace; not because of the fineness of the threads wherewith it was woven, but because it was conceived with perfect integrity of [His Mother's] body. The garment is praised not because woman's hand had woven it, but because Mary's virginity had engendered it. And so in it the grace of dazzling whiteness is praised, because its spotless purity no care of artificer had procured. Clearly, no fuller could make the garment of Christ. The fuller can give brightness, whiteness, purity; but he cannot give virginity, justice, goodness; for the one belongs to the art of the work, the other to the order of virtue." ‡

S. AMBROSE.

"We have sung to you, and you have not danced."—*Luke* vii. 32.

"Men are used, according to the custom, especially at marriages, to dance or sing. We, too, have our votive nuptials at which we should dance or sing. We have the celebration of our vows, through Christ's being united to the Church, as says John, *He that hath the bride, is the bridegroom.* § On account, then, of these nuptials it befits us to dance. Hence the royal prophet David, whilst he sung much, is also said to have danced before the Ark of the Testament; for we read || that in a transport of joy he broke out into dancing,

* *De Sancta Virginitate*, nn. 3-6, Patr. Lat. Tom. 40.
† *In Joan.* Tr. x. n. 3.
‡ *Hom.* iv. Patr. Lat. Tom. 57, p. 234.
§ *John* iii. 29.
|| 2 *Kings* vi. 14.

because he foresaw in spirit that Mary of his own seed was to be united as a bride to Christ. It was this that led him to say, *And He as a bridegroom coming out of His bridechamber, hath rejoiced as a giant to run the way.** For this cause did the prophet David dance before the Ark. And what shall we say is the Ark, but holy Mary? For as the Ark bore within it the tables of the Testament, so Mary bore the Heir of the same Testament: it preserved within it the Law, she the Gospel; it had the voice, she the Word, of God. The Ark, moreover, was radiant within and without with the shining of gold, whilst holy Mary gleamed within and without with the splendour of virginity; it was adorned with earthly gold, she with heavenly." †

"The Only-begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father." —*John* i. 18.

"In John the Evangelist, the bosom of Christ was faith: in God the Father, Deity: in His Mother Mary, virginity. There is Christ's bosom, where is the dwelling-place of virtues. There He reclines His head, where He finds the home of His heavenly precepts." ‡

S. AUGUSTINE.

"When thou wert under the fig-tree I saw thee."—*John* i. 48.

"Christ sees thee in thy shadow. He will not see thee in His light. For what is it, *When thou wert under the fig-tree I saw thee?* What did He mean by this? What does it signify? Bear to mind the original sin of Adam, wherein we all die. When he first sinned, he made for himself under-girdles of fig-leaves, signifying by these leaves the solicitation of concupiscence which he got through sinning. Thence we are born, thus we are born, we are born in flesh of sin, which the likeness of flesh of sin alone heals. Therefore God sent His Son in likeness of flesh of sin.§ Thence He came, but thus came not. For the Virgin conceived Him not by concupiscence, but by faith. He came to the Virgin, He was before the Virgin. Her whom He created He elected, her whom He would elect He created. He brought to the Virgin fecundity, He took not away integrity." ||

CASSIAN.

"For the grace of God our Saviour hath appeared."—*Tit.* ii. 11.

"See how this man of God is speaking from God, and attests by a preaching most evident that the grace of God appeared from Mary. And lest, perchance thou sayest, that it was not from Mary that God appeared, he at once added the name of Saviour, for the very end that thou mightest believe that He who was born of Mary, is God, whom thou canst not deny to have been born a Saviour, according to what is written: *For this day is born to you*

* *Ps.* xviii. 6.

† *Serm.* xlii., Int. Opp. S. Ambros. The author is uncertain, but there is nothing to show that he is not S. Ambrose. Ed. Maurin., vol. iv. p. 551. Venet. 1750.

‡ Int. Opp. S. Ambros., Serm. 12, *De S. Epiphania* v.

§ *Rom.* viii. 3. || Serm. 69, *De verb. Evang., Matt.* ii. n. 4.

a Saviour. O admirable Master, Blessed Paul, verily given by God to the Gentiles. . . . *The Great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ* (*v.* 13): It is not allowed to say, *Christ* was born from Mary, and not God; for the Apostle proclaims: *God*. It is not allowed to say, *Jesus* was born of Mary, and not God; for the Apostle testifies: *God*. It is not allowed to say, *a Saviour* is born, and not God; for the Apostle affirms: *God*." *

S. EPIPHANIUS.

"A great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun," etc.—*Apoc.* xii.

"O Virgin most holy, thou hast brought the hosts of angels into amazement. A stupendous marvel is in the heavens: a woman clothed with the sun, bearing light in her arms. A stupendous marvel in heaven: a Virgin's nuptial bed having the Son of God. A stupendous marvel in heaven: the Lord of angels is become the infant child of a Virgin. Of old the angels accused Eve, but now they render praise and glory to Mary who has raised up again the fallen Eve, and sent to heaven Adam who was thrust out of paradise. For she is the mediatress between heaven and earth, who has naturally restored union." †

§ 9. Some Doctrinal Passages.

S. IGNATIUS.

S. Ignatius in the second century confutes the Docetæ, who denied the real Humanity of Jesus Christ, by asserting the true Maternity of Mary, as the following passages show:—

"Jesus Christ is flesh and spirit, both from Mary and from God." ‡

"He was borne in the womb of Mary according to the dispensation of God." §

"Of the line of David from Mary truly born, He ate and drank, truly suffered under Pontius Pilate, was truly crucified and died." ||

"Truly was He born of the Virgin, truly crucified for us in the flesh, under Pontius Pilate, and the tetrarch Herod." ¶

"Invisible, for us become visible; impassible, for us become passible." **

* *De Incarn. Christi*, L. ii. c. 4.

† *Orat. De laudib. S. M. Deip.*, int. Opp. S. Epiphanii.

‡ *Ephes.* viii. § *Ib.* xviii.

|| *Trall.* ix. ¶ *Smyrn.* i.

** *Ad Polycarp.* iii. "Ave verum Corpus natum De Maria Virgine; Vere passum, immolatum, In Cruce pro homine."

S. JUSTIN M.

S. Justin professes his faith regarding the Holy Eucharist, as being the true Flesh and Blood of Jesus Christ, and the spiritual food of the faithful, by basing it on the reality of the Incarnation, that is, on the true Maternity of the Blessed Virgin Mary. His words are:—

"In like manner as Jesus Christ our Saviour, having been made flesh by the word of God, had both flesh and blood for our salvation, so likewise have we been taught that the food which is blessed by the prayer of His word, and from which our blood and flesh by transmutation are nourished, is the flesh and blood of that Jesus who was made flesh." *

S. Ephrem frequently contrasts the eternal generation of the Son of God with His birth of Mary. He calls the latter our Divine Lord's "little mystery," His "little crown," and "smaller riches." Thus in the following passages:—

"Blessed be the glorious Hidden One, since even Thy little mystery is a fountain of mysteries. Who is able to clear up mysteries that fail not? If a man were to take a likeness of Thee, it would be a fountain whence all likenesses would flow, and to which we should be able to look, and shadow out Thy image upon our heart. In Thy one adorable Image ten thousand beauteous things are crowded together. . . . All searching is too short to reach Thy mountain. Faith does find it, and love by prayer." †

"David Thy father in the hundred and tenth Psalm twined together two numbers, as it were crowns to Thee, and came, O Conqueror. With these shalt Thou be crowned, and unto the throne shalt Thou ascend, and sit. A great crown is the number that is twined in the hundred, wherein is crowned Thy Godhead. A little crown is that of the number ten,‡ which crowneth the head of thy Humanity, O Victorious One!" §

"Thy visible generation is laid up with Thy Father. Angels are astonished at thy smaller riches. A small drop, O Lord, of Thy history becomes with those below a flood of interpretations." ||

"It is right and meet that from the same source whence we learnt His Humanity, we should also learn His Divinity. It is right that from the same source whence we learnt His Birth from Mary, we should also learn His other prior Birth." ¶

"O Son and Fruit, who wert eternally with Thy Root, without beginning,

* *Apol.* i. 66. See Auguste Nicolas, *La Vierge Marie*, Tom. iv., Liv. iii., ch. iv., p. 78 *sq.*

† *Rhythm* iv. *Adv. Scrutat.*, Morris, p. 117.

‡ Alluding to *Ps.* cix., Dixit Dominus Domino meo, wherein are strikingly set forth both the Divinity and the Humanity of the Incarnate Word.

§ *Rhythm* vii., *On the Nativity*, p. 38. See p. 43.

|| *Rhythms upon the Faith*, xi., p. 145.

¶ *Rhythm* lxv. *Ib.*, p. 323.

Thou Son of time, whose beginning was from the house of David . . . blessed be Thy former Birth, and blessed be Thy second Birth." *

"One saith, As for this Child, this day was His birth; and another, The Ancient of Days, and the Elder of all the creation." †

S. AUGUSTINE.

"The Nativities of Our Lord Jesus Christ be two; the one without a woman for mother, the other without a man for father." ‡

S. GREGORY OF NYSSA.

"The Maker of all things, and the Father of ages He saith that He hath *to-day* begotten: that by attaching a term indicative of time to the season of His Generation, the words may bring before one not the Existence before the ages, but the Generation in time by the Flesh for man's salvation." §

On Mary's painless and ineffable Childbirth.

S. EPHREM.

"The First-born entered the belly, and the pure Virgin suffered not; He went in, and came forth in pangs; || and the Fair one perceived Him. Glorious and hidden was His entering in: vile and visible His coming forth: for He was God in His going in, and Man in His coming forth. A wonder and astonishment to hear! Fire went into the belly, and clothed Himself with a Body and came forth." ¶

On this passage Fr. Morris thus comments: "*Suffered* will apply to mind or body. 'She begat a perfect man,' says S. Hilary, 'without having aught that was hers minished.' ** The received doctrine is, that as Christ entered the house in spite of the doors being shut, so He came forth from the Blessed Virgin without opening the gate of her womb. S. Ephrem thus speaks of her womb *sealed*, an expression used by Origen and others, and taken from *Cant.* iv. 2.

"'In Thy resurrection Thou persuadest the slanderers concerning Thy birth, since the womb was sealed, and the sepulchre closed up, being alike pure in the womb, and living in the sepulchre. The womb and the sepulchre being sealed were witnesses unto Thee. The belly and hell cried aloud of Thy birth and Thy resurrection: the belly conceived Thee, which was sealed: hell brought Thee forth, which was closed up. Not after nature did either the

* Opp. Syr., vol. iii., p. 610.

† *Is.* ix. 6; *Ps.* ii. 7; *Dan.* vii. 6; *Ecclus.* i. 4; *Rhythm against the Jews*, Morris, p. 67.

‡ Ap. Morris, p. 43. § i., p. 386 d.

|| "The *pangs* here may be those of compassion."

¶ *Rhythm* iv., *Upon the Faith*, etc., Morris, p. 115.

** *De Trin.* iii. 19. See xviii. fin.

belly conceive Thee, or hell give Thee up. . . . Virgin womb and sealed sepulchre, like trumpets, proclaimed Him to a deaf people.' *

"'All slander was put to shame by Mary, for she was sealed.' †

"'Mary neither suffered as a woman, nor had she the pains in bringing forth as a virgin.' ‡

"'Oh the disgustfulness of these foul and filthy thoughts,' writes S. Gregory of Nyssa, 'how is it that he who talks in this way understandeth not, how that even when manifested by the flesh, God did not allow of the passions of nature in the formation of His own Body, but it was from the Holy Spirit and the Power of the Most High that the Child was born to us: and neither did the Virgin suffer,§ nor was the Spirit minished, nor the Power of the Most High divided . . . and the Child was born whole, and to the undefiled estate of the Mother He wrought no scathe.'" ||

"The Only-begotten went forth from the Fountain of being, and dwelt in a Virgin, that by a common birth He might be the one Brother of many. . . . Now the Son, whose birth from His Father is unsearchable, underwent this other birth which is searchable, that in the one we might learn the infinitude of His Majesty, in the other the immensity of His grace. For, as His Majesty is immense, so that by no words can His first birth from the Father be expressed; so too is the superabundance of His infinite grace, that by no tongue can the later birth be set forth. . . . He was born therefore of God and was born again of man, that He might make us to be born [His children], who, if we inquire about His birth from the Father, do so, not to pry into it, but to believe; or about His birth from a woman, do this, not that we should shudder at it (abominemur, abhor), but to exult. Moreover, His death upon the Cross testifies to His birth from a woman, since He who died was assuredly born. But the annunciation of Gabriel shows forth His birth from the Father: for He says, *The Power of the Most High shall overshadow thee*. If then it is the power of the Most High, it is clear that it is no seed of mortal man. His human conception, therefore, is to be inferred as a consequence from His death on the Cross, and His former birth from the Angel's declaration, so that he who denies that He was born, is put to silence, and he who affirms that He took His beginning from Mary, is convicted by the fact that His divinity was before all time. . . .

"Now in the body that He had assumed He entered into hell, there spoiled its riches and scattered its treasures. Thus He came to Eve, the mother of all the living.¶ She is that vineyard whose hedge Death opened with Eve's own hands that he might taste of her fruits. And hence Eve, the mother of all the living, became to all the living a fountain of death. But there bloomed forth Mary, the new vine in place of Eve the old vine, and in her dwelt the

* *In Nat. Dom.* viii. Morris, p. 40. † *Ib.* ix., p. 46.

‡ Opp. Gr. T. ii., p. 165, et passim.

§ See Petav. *De Incarn.* x. 6, § 3, and Assem. in Opp. Gr. iii., p. 41; Huet. *Origenian.* ii. 4, § 2, who quote Pseud-Orig. *Hom. in div. Theod. Dial.* 2, p. 79; S. Aug., *De Civ. D.* xxii. 8, § 21; S. Jerome, *C. Pel.* ii. 4; S. Ambrose, *Ep.* 81, 42-4, whom see in *Comm. in Luc.* ii. 57; S. Hormisd., *Ep.* 79; S. Greg. Magn., *Hom.* 26, 1, *In Evang.*

|| *C.-Eun.* ii., vol. ii., p. 536, c. See also Feuard. on *S. Iren.* ii. 28.

¶ *Gen.* iii. 20.

new Life,* Christ; so that, whilst Death was feeding and drawing on with confidence, as was his wont, there might be hid for him in mortal fruit, a life that was destructive of death. When then Death, nothing fearing, had swallowed it [eum, *i.e.*, *Christ*, the fruit] down, he thereby set free the Life, and many too therewith. For He had hastened on the scene, Who is the medicine of life; He had come down from on high, and having united to Himself a body, was that same mortal fruit. So that when Death came to feed as usual, Life, who had returned, put an end to Death. This is that Food which hungered to eat its eater. Consequently, by this one fruit alone which he ravenously swallowed down, Death set at liberty many lives that he had greedily devoured. . . ." †

"The Lofty One from the highest lowered Himself to all that is most lowly, thereby to humble the pride which had cast Adam down from his exaltation. Through the ear Mary saw the Hidden One who came by the voice. Conceived in the womb was His power that came to a body. . . . The Infant in the woman saw to what depths of lowliness the Most High had brought Himself, how He had come into, and dwelt in, a womb of infirmity, and sucked the milk of weakness. The woman too marvelled how much He had grown, He who had His repose in the bosom of God. They both wondered with admiration at each other in turn, how they had merited to increase in grace." ‡

S. LEO.

"The Sacrament of our reconciliation which had been pre-ordained from eternity was fulfilled by no figures; because not yet had the Holy Ghost come upon the Virgin, nor the Power of the Most High overshadowed her, so that within her inviolate womb—Wisdom building for herself a house—the Word might become Flesh, and—the form of God and the form of a servant uniting together into one person—the Creator of times should be born in time, and He by whom all things were made, should Himself be generated amongst all things. For unless the New Man, made to the likeness of flesh of sin, received our oldness (vetustatem), and He who is consubstantial with the Father deigned to be consubstantial also with His Mother, and He who alone is free from sin united to Himself our nature, the captivity of the whole race of man would be kept under the yoke of the devil." §

S. ZENO.

"We have spoken of the first carnal circumcision which belonged to the Jews. Let us now briefly say something of the second spiritual circumcision which is ours, and has such great power as—what was impossible to the former—to take its beginning from woman. Though, in fact, it was from woman, since she it was who was the first to sin, that the remedy of circumcision had its origin. And because the devil, creeping in through the ear by temptation, had wounded and given death to Eve, Christ entering by the ear

* *John* xi. 25, xiv. 6.

† S. Ephrem, *Sermo de Domino nostro*, Lamy, vol. i., pp. 147-156.

‡ From a sermon of S. Ephrem, on *In the beginning was the Word* (*John* i. 1), Lamy, vol. ii., p. 515.

§ Epist. *Ad Pulcheriam Augustam*.

to Mary, dried up all the vices of the heart, and cured the woman's wound by being born of the Virgin. . . . Adam likewise was circumcised by the Lord's cross. And because by the woman, who alone had touched the tree of death, both sexes had found their ruin, contrarywise by the Man suspended on the tree the whole human race was again made alive. And lest what was in the beginning should not appear restored to its former state, the Man was first consummated on the Cross; and when He was laid happily to sleep, likewise, from His side, by the stroke of the lance, it was not a rib that was now drawn out, but by means of water and blood, that is to say, by baptism and martyrdom, the spiritual body of the spiritual woman was shed forth, so that thus meetly might be renewed Adam through Christ, and Eve through the Church."*

* Lib. i. *Tract.* xiii. 10, Patr. Lat. Tom. 11, p. 352.

CHAPTER III.

THE DIGNITY AND SANCTITY OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN: MARY'S HABITUAL GRACE AND HOLINESS.

1. If we would form any adequate view of the teaching of the early Fathers on the greatness of Our Lady's sanctity, we must take account, at the same time, of what they say with such copious praise regarding her sublime dignity as the true Mother of God. These two, her dignity and her sanctity, are so intimately united in their mind, that the thought which appears, perhaps more than any other, to underlie their whole doctrine of the Incarnation is, that the Son of God willed to have for His Mother one worthy of Himself, that is to say, so far worthy as a purely human creature was capable of being made. In other words, the transcendent dignity of the Divine Maternity is with the Fathers, the only standard whereby to measure the excellence of Mary's grace and holiness.

2. It can hardly fail to strike any one who peruses even cursorily the writings of those Fathers who speak most of the Blessed Virgin, how frequently they recur to the Angelic Salutation, as the Divine witness to Mary's sanctity and perfection. The *Hail Mary* holds already in their thoughts the same prominence that it has ever since done in the popular devotion of the faithful. It is a theme on which they never tire to dwell; one always new, ever suggesting matter for reverent astonishment and devout meditation, an exhaustless well, whence they are wont to draw for Our Lady fresh praises. With us the Angelic Salutation has come to be, so to say, the recognised formula and expression of the Mystery of the Incarnation; but devotion to the *Ave Maria* had its origin in the very earliest Age of the Church. It has its place in some of the most ancient Liturgies, whilst there are most interesting traces that it was from the beginning in popular use * as a recognised form of prayer. We

* Thus in the apocryphal *Passing of Mary*—which would seem to have been very popular from the early translations that were made of it—Our Lady is

find it in doctrinal germ in that first traditional view—set forth by S. Justin, S. Irenæus, and Tertullian—of Mary as the Second Eve, wherein the speech of the serpent to our first mother in the garden, is so strikingly contrasted in its nature and effects, with Gabriel's Ave to Our Lady at the Annunciation. Origen develops the same idea, which thenceforth finds its place in the writings of Fathers and Saints in all succeeding ages.

3. The Fathers appear to consider no terms of eulogy too high wherewith to extol the excellence of Mary's grace and sanctity. Thus they say that she possessed in fulness * what the rest of the Saints received only in measure. In speaking of any others who were pre-eminent for holiness and virtue, they affirm that the Blessed Virgin surpassed them all; that beside her, their shining was but that of distant stars compared with the splendour of the great luminaries of heaven, and that the glory of her grace and sanctity excels that of the highest angels. They continually heap together epithets in her praise, which may at times sound redundant; as though all human language failed adequately to express her purity and grace. They frequently assert that Mary can never be sufficiently lauded, and that whatever is said in her honour falls short of the truth, that her sublime perfection exceeds all created intelligence, and that God alone is able to comprehend its greatness.

4. In speaking of the Blessed Virgin, the Fathers not unfrequently associate her sanctity and prerogatives so intimately with those of her Divine Son, as to place Jesus Christ and His Blessed Mother, in a manner, quite apart from all others, and in a category by themselves, parallel to the relation which our first parents, Adam and Eve, hold with the rest of mankind. Hence they often apply many figures, types, and scriptures of the Old Testament interchangeably, now to Jesus Christ, now to Mary; and interpret much, that in its strict and primary meaning belongs to the Incarnate Word alone, as finding its fulfilment properly and personally in His most holy Mother—though this, of course, in a secondary and lower sense.

5. The Fathers are moreover used to refer generally to the Blessed Virgin the types and figurative expressions, employed in Holy Writ to show forth the perfection and sanctity of Christ's

represented as successively saluted by an Angel, S. John the Evangelist, and all the Apostles, with the words: *Hail, Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee.* Ante-Nicene Christian Library, vol. xvi. pp. 516-17.

* See S. Peter Chrysologus, supra, *Exegesis* on *Luke* i. 27, p. 138.

mystical body the Church: interpreting the same passage of scripture, at one time of the Church, at another of Mary, so that it is sometimes difficult to say whether in their view, Mary is the type of the Church, or the Church the type of Mary.*

6. It is true that many of the praises which the Fathers bestow upon Mary, and the eulogistic expressions they employ when speaking of her spotless purity, have principally and primarily in view the prerogatives of her divine maternity and her virginal integrity, which are in themselves extrinsic. But it is also true that these same praises are, in the mind of their authors, also referable to Our Lady's personal and interior sanctity. For we should remember how much they are wont to insist on the profitlessness of a merely corporal relationship of flesh and blood with Jesus Christ; how they say repeatedly that it would have availed Mary nought to be His Mother, without, on her part, a corresponding union with Him of soul by grace and charity; and how they propose her as that typical virgin, perfectly chaste and pure alike in body and spirit, who merited to be Christ's Mother, because she had first borne Him in her heart, before she conceived Him in her womb.

7. Our Lady is set forth by the Fathers, as not only herself holy and full of grace, but also a channel of grace and sanctification to others. This, indeed, is a matter distinct from personal sanctity, and might be treated of apart by itself. But as the two are so often found together in the same passages of the Fathers, and their union follows the ordinary rule in divine things, we shall not here separate them, though later on, when we treat more particularly of intercession and invocation, we shall revert to the latter point again. All that we would here observe is, that Mary is proposed in the writings of the Fathers as the chief exemplar of this divine rule, especially in their comments on the mystery of the Visitation which we have already cited, and that the general drift of their teaching is, that as she merited by grace to give us Jesus Christ the author and source of all grace, so has she been made by Him through grace, the principal channel whereby are communicated the fruits of His Redemption, and all graces for our sanctification.

* See *infra*, Ch., *Mary and the Church.*

S. HIPPOLYTUS.

"For, whereas the Word of God was without flesh, He took upon Himself His holy flesh by means of the holy Virgin, and prepared a robe which He wove for Himself, like a bridegroom," etc.*

In the Epistle of the presbyters and deacons of Achaia on the martyrdom of S. Andrew (A.D. 80), the Apostle is reported to have thus taught Ægeas the mystery of the Cross

"This is what I have most ardently desired to say to thee, in order that, whilst teaching that the souls of all men have lost their original justice,† I may also show the restoration of the same by the mystery of the Cross. For the first man through the tree of transgression brought in death. Hence it was necessary that by the tree of the passion, death which had entered, should be driven out. And therefore, because the first man was created from immaculate earth, it was necessary that from an immaculate Virgin should be born a perfect Man, whereby the Son of God who had before made man, should recover that eternal life which men had lost through Adam.‡ Then, that by the tree of the Cross He might shut out the tree of concupiscence, He stretched out on the Cross His spotless hands for hands of themselves stretched out; for food most sweet, He received the drink of gall; and taking in Himself our mortality, He gave to us His own immortality." §

S. PETER OF ALEXANDRIA.

". . . Our Lord and God, Jesus Christ, in the end of the world born according to the flesh of our holy and glorious Lady, Mother of God and ever-Virgin, even in very truth of Mary the Mother of God. . . ." ||

PSEUDO-CLEMENT.

"The womb of the Holy Virgin carried Our Lord Jesus Christ the Son of God; and the body which Our Lord wore, and in which He sustained the conflict in this world, He put on from the holy Virgin. From this therefore understand the greatness and dignity of virginity." ¶

MELITO, Bishop of the City of Attica.

"This is He who took a bodily form in the Virgin . . . the Lamb that was slain, the voiceless Lamb, . . . who was born of Mary, fair sheep of the fold." **

* *De Christo et Antichristo*, n. 4; Ante-Nicene Christian Library, vol. ix., p. 4. S. Hippolytus in several places calls Mary by such titles as "All-holy; ever-Virgin; holy immaculate Virgin" (*Ib.*, p. 90, vol. xviii., p. 108). See especially the passage quoted above, Ch. ii., p. 77.

† *Eccles.* vii. 30.

‡ The purity of Mary is here compared to that of paradise, before God had cursed it, and after He had blessed it.

§ *Epist. Presbyt. et Diac. Achaiæ*, cap. v.; Galland. Biblioth. Patr. T. 1, p. 156, Venet. 1765. This Epistle is considered to belong at any rate to the 2d or 3d century.

|| Fragment. *Chronic. Paschal.* Galland., p. 329.

¶ 1 *Ep. on Virginity*, Ante-Nicene Christian Library, vol. xiv., p. 365.

** Fragments of the 2d and 3d centuries, *Ib.*, vol. xxii., p. 127.

LACTANTIUS.

"Therefore the Holy Spirit of God, descending from heaven chose the holy Virgin, that He might enter into (se insinuaret) her womb. And she, being filled by the possession of the Divine Spirit (Divino Spiritu hausto), conceived." *

S. CYRIL OF JERUSALEM.

"It behoved Him who is most innocent, and the Teacher of innocence, to come forth from innocent nuptials." †

S. GREGORY NAZIANZEN.

"The Son of God was conceived of the Virgin, who had been purified beforehand in soul and body by the Holy Ghost. For it behoved both that the child-bearing should be made honourable, and that virginity should be afore had in honour; since it was God who came forth with the assumption—still One, though from two opposites—of body and spirit,‡ whereof one gave divinity, and the other was made divine." §

"Having emptied Himself of His glory, being the heavenly and immutable Image of the Heavenly Father, by laws as well human as not those of mortals, being made flesh in the venerable bowels of the Virgin's womb. . . ." ||

"From the bosom of the Virgin sprang the God Man, whom the Spirit of the Great God moulded together, raising in the temple a holy temple. For the Mother is the temple of Christ, and Christ of the Word." ¶

> "If from a womb not pure Thou cam'st to light,
> Thyself Thou art not pure. For what is pure,
> Save by the pure may not be held. . . . Thus God,
> By His pure Mother coming, from her womb
> Takes nought less pure Himself; nay, all the more
> Her very womb with purity adorns." **

S. GREGORY OF NYSSA.

"O heavens, what a bridal chamber does the Bridegroom's friend procure for the pure and stainless nuptials. *The Holy Ghost*, he says, *shall come upon thee*. Oh, what blessed flesh, that with excelling purity of soul drew to itself such goods. For in all others hardly does the pure soul receive the presence of the Holy Ghost; but in her case the flesh becomes the receptacle of the Spirit." ††

INTER OPERA S. ATHANASII.

"How greatly should be accounted the glory of the holy and divine Virgin Mary, who is, and is called, the Mother of the Word, according to His birth of

* *Div. Institut.* L. iv. c. 12.
† *Catech.* xx. 25.
‡ That is, of humanity and divinity.
§ *Orat.* 44, *In S. Pascha*, ix. Patr. Gr. Tom. 36, p. 630.
|| *Ib.*, p. 533.
¶ *Ib.*, p. 1564.
** *Carm.* vii. *Ad Nemesium*, vv. 220-228.
†† Attributed to S. Gregory of Nyssa, in an ancient Catena., ap. Combefis. in Bibliotheca Concionator., T. vi., p. 328.

flesh. For now hosts of angels celebrated His birth; and then the woman cried out with a loud voice, saying: *Blessed is the womb that bore Thee, and the paps that gave Thee suck.** Moreover the Lord's Mother and ever-Virgin Mary, when she knew what was done in her, said: *From henceforth all generations shall call me blessed.* Now what was done in Mary has turned to the glory of all virgins. For they hang, so to say, from that root, as so many virginal branches." †

"I do not think that these words, *The power of the Most High shall overshadow thee*, were verified in the holy Virgin for a time only, but always."

"The new Eve, the daughter of life."

"If He is King who was born of the Virgin, His Mother who bore Him is rightly and truly ranked as Queen and Lady." ‡

S. EPHREM.

"Most holy Lady Mother of God, alone most pure in soul and body; alone exceeding all perfection of purity, both chastity and virginity; alone made in thy entirety the home of all the graces of the most Holy Spirit; and hence excelling beyond all compare even the angelic Virtues in purity and sanctity of soul and body, cast thine eyes upon me. . . ."

"My Lady most holy, Mother of God, and full of grace, most blessed, and most pleasing to God, vessel of the Divinity of thy only Son. . . . All-pure, all-immaculate, all-stainless, all-undefiled, all-blameless, all-worthy of praise, all-incorrupt, all-most blessed, all-inviolate. . . . Virgin in soul, in body, and in spirit, . . . incomprehensible miracle, . . . spotless robe of Him who *clothes Himself with light as with a garment*. . . . Mountain of God, holy mountain, wherein it was the good pleasure of God to dwell, . . . holy root of Jesse, . . . City of God, beautiful by nature, and inaccessible to all blemish (*ὥραια τῇ φύσει, καὶ ἀμώμου παντὸς ἀνεπίδεκτος*). Flower unfading, . . . Purple woven by God, alone most immaculate."

"No standard of victory (*τροπαῖον*) is stronger than thy defence. Thee therefore, O thou altogether immaculate, and the world's mediatress, with penitent heart, do I supplicate. In necessities I invoke thy prompt protection, salutary next after God, and thy secure and most powerful patronage—guilty though I be of many offences—from the depth of my heart."

"My most holy Lady, Mother of God, and full of grace; glory of our common nature; dispenser of all good things; after the Trinity, mistress of all; after the Paraclete, another consoler; and after the Mediator, the whole world's mediatress; than cherubim and seraphim higher beyond compare, and more glorious by far; unsearchable abyss of God's goodness; protection of the whole universe; fulness of the graces of the Trinity, holding as though the second place after the Trinity; bridge of the whole world, leading us to the heights of heaven; key, introducing us to heaven. O thou our patroness and mediatress, behold my confidence, and my divinely-inspired desire, since thou art that one who hast compassion and power. As the Mother, then, of Him who alone is good and merciful, receive my most miserable soul, and

* *Luke* xi. 27.

† *Comment. in Luc.*, ap. Montfauc. in Nov. PP. Græc. Collect., T. ii., p. 43.

‡ *Orat. in Annunt.* n. 9.

graciously obtain through thy mediation and defence, that it be found at the right hand of thy Only-begotten Son."

"Immaculate and inviolate, uncorrupted, and utterly removed from all filth and stain of sin."

"O Mother of God, greater than all thought or speech! O Virgin, without controversy more sublime than all virginity, through whom man's nature, which, so long fallen, had departed far from God, has, by a way of inexplicable benignity and incomparable condescension, been united to the Blessed and Divine Nature. . . ." *

S. ZENO.

"O Charity, how loving, how rich, and Oh, how powerful! He has nothing, who has not thee. Thou wert able to change God into man. Thou madest Him, become little, to be for a short while a stranger to the immensity of His Majesty. Thou didst confine Him to the virginal womb for nine months. Eve, again restored, thou didst reform into Mary (Evam redintegrasti in Mariam). Adam thou hast renewed in Christ. Thou didst provide the Sacred Cross for the world already lost. . . ." †

"But some one will say: Even the Virgin Mary was both married and gave birth. If this be also thy case, I yield. She however was virgin after marriage, virgin after conception, virgin after her Son. In fact, if there were anything better than virginity, the Son of God was well able to grant this too to His Mother, to whom He granted to enjoy the honour of divine virginity. In what state therefore thou wert born, glory in remaining virgin, and guard the flower of holy chastity, subject to no law [of a husband], as the treasure of faith. Be holy both in body and spirit." ‡

"O great mystery (sacramentum)! Mary, the Virgin most pure, conceived; after conception, Virgin she brought forth; after childbirth, Virgin she remained. . . . With ready will the Son of God reposes in the full-flowering home of chastity, and in the womb of the holy Virgin prepares for Himself a body with the view to being born as He had willed. O prodigy! Mary conceives of Him to whom she gives birth. Her womb is big with Majesty from no human generation. . . . The Virgin holds Him, whom the world and the world's fulness cannot contain. Meanwhile her limbs advance the growth of her Maker, and His own work clothes the Workman with shape. . . . O unheard of marvel! Constrained by the love of His image, Mary brings forth not in pain, but with joy." §

"Him, whom the heavens contain not, the bosom of a single woman bore. Our Ruler did she rule. Him in whom we are, she conceived. To our Bread she gave suck." ||

S. EPIPHANIUS.

"With what shameless boldness do they attack that stainless Virgin who merited to be the dwelling-place of God; who out of the infinite number of

* *Precationes ad Deiparam*, Opp. Græc. Lat. T. iii., pp. 524-537.
† Lib. i. Tr. ii. 9, Patr. Lat. Tom. 11, p. 278.
‡ *Ib.* Tr. v., p. 305. § *Ib.* Lib. ii. Tr. ix., p. 415.
|| *In Natal.* iv., ap. Morris, p. 28, f.

Israelites was elected for this one end, that she might be consecrated as the vessel and habitation for the Divine Childbirth alone." *

"What things we have thought to be most religious and profitable for the Church, these we have professed concerning the holy Virgin, that we might undertake the defence of her who is in all respects (κατὰ παντά) full of grace, as spake Gabriel, *Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with thee.*" †

"*Hail, full of grace.* For, God alone excepted, she is superior to all. By nature she is far more beautiful than the very cherubim, and the entire Angelic host. To show her forth no heavenly nor earthly tongue at all suffices, nay not even that of the angels." ‡

S. AMBROSE.

"Christ chose this vessel into which He was about to descend, not of earth, but from heaven; and He consecrated it a temple of purity." §

"Mary's grace was so great, that not only did she preserve the grace of virginity in herself, but conferred the privilege of integrity on those whom she might visit. She visited John the Baptist, and he leapt in his mother's womb before he was born. At Mary's voice the little infant exulted. . . . Mary's sublimity is such that the universe is not able to sustain it." ||

SULPICIUS SEVERUS.

"Our Lord and Saviour, Himself ever-Virgin, had a Virgin for His Mother. He offered in His own person an example of virginity to men, and in His Mother to women. Whereby is clearly shown, how in both sexes blessed purity merited to have the fulness of the Divinity, since all that there is in the Son, was found in the Mother." ¶

S. GAUDENTIUS.

"Christ, born to-day of the most blessed Virgin, has repaired afresh that image which had been corrupted by the empoisoned bite of the serpent, so that of that world, whereof He had been at its beginning the Maker, He might in the consummation of ages be the repairer. . . . He then began to be what before He was not, without ceasing to be what He was. To this omnipotence of the Son of God and man the Virgin Mother also bears witness, who, conceiving of the Holy Ghost, in such wise gave birth to God and Man, whom she had borne in her chaste womb, that with the incorrupt Mother of so great name, her perfect integrity remained after childbirth yet more glorious. Rightly have we called it a divine childbirth, because He is God, who of the

* *Hær.* 58 (or 78), n. 6. † *Ib.* n. 24.

‡ Inter Opp. S. Epiphanii, *Orat. de Mariæ laudib.*

§ *De Instit. Virg.* v. 33.—"The Saint calls the divine Mother 'a heavenly vessel,' not because Mary was not earthly by nature, as heretics have dreamt, but because she was heavenly by grace. She was as superior to the angels of heaven, in sanctity and purity, as it was becoming that she should be, in whose womb the King of Glory was to dwell." S. Alph. Lig., *Disc. on Mary's Immac. Concept., Glories of Mary*, p. 250.

Ib. vii. 50. See S. Ambr., *In Ps.* cxviii. Serm. 22, 30, quoted above, p. 75.

¶ Epist. 2, Int. Opp. Appendix. Patr. Lat. T. 20, p. 28.

Virgin was born in flesh, as said Gabriel to her, *The Holy that shall be born of thee, shall be called the Son of God.** For, from His assuming the flesh of our weakness, the self-same is the Son of Mary who is also the Son of God; because none other was born of Mary, than He who glided in through her maternal ears, and filled the Virgin's womb. That is to say, by the Holy Ghost He Himself formed His humanity (hominem suum); since *Wisdom built for herself a house:*† the habitation, namely, of our body, now His own, with which habitation He was clad, and, without any loss of His Mother's integrity, thence went forth. For the most blessed Mary in giving birth to the Incorruptible, is both Mother and Virgin." ‡

S. JEROME.

"For me virginity is consecrate in Mary and Christ.§ When the Virgin conceived in her womb and brought forth for us the Child, *whose government is upon His shoulder, God the Mighty, the Father of the world to come,*|| the curse was done away. Death by Eve, life by Mary. And so too the richer gift of virginity flowed to women, because it began from a woman. As soon as the Son of God came upon earth, He instituted for Himself a new family, that He who was adored by angels in heaven, might have angels also on earth. Then it was that chaste Judith cut off the head of Holofernes. Then it was that Aman, who is interpreted *iniquity,* was burnt up in his own fire. Then James and John—leaving their father, net, and boat—followed the Saviour; relinquishing alike affection of blood, ties of the world, and all domestic care."

S. Jerome describes the ideal Virgin, that is, Mary, as follows:—

"Behold one in truth, the handmaid of the Lord. Holy she is, in whom is no guile, all simplicity. . . . The spouse of Christ is the ark of the covenant, within and without o'erlaid with gold, a keeper of the law of the Lord. As in the ark there was nothing but the tables of the Testament, so too in thee no one from outside should be thought of. Over this propitiatory, as though upon the Cherubim, the Lord is pleased to sit. . . . The Apostle thus defines a virgin, that *she should be holy in body and in spirit.* . . .¶ Propose to thyself Blessed Mary, who was of such great purity that she merited to be the Lord's Mother. But when the Angel Gabriel came down under the appearance of a man, and said to her: *Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with thee,* dismayed and affrighted, she was unable to answer. For never had she been saluted by a man. At length she gains knowledge of the messenger, and speaks. And she who was in dread of a man, converses with an Angel, unmoved by fear. Thou too canst be a mother of the Lord. . . ." **

"Our Lord and Saviour, from the first patriarch, at length arrived at the Virgin, as though at the Jordan; who flowing with full torrent, overstreamed

* *Luke* i. 35. † *Prov.* ix. 1.

‡ Serm. xiii., *De diversis Capitulis, Tertius,* Tom. 20, p. 933.

§ Mihi virginitas in Maria dedicatur et Christo. See what is here omitted, supra, in *Is.* xi. 1, pp. 107, 8.

|| *Is.* ix. 6. ¶ 1 *Cor.* vii. 34.

** *Epist.* xxii., *Ad Eustoch.* nn. 18, 19, 21, 24, 38, Cf. *Ep.* cvii. ad Lætam, n. 7, and *Ep.* xlviii., *Ad Pammachium,* n. 21.

with the graces of the Holy Ghost (quæ pleno gurgite fluens, Spiritus Sancti gratiis redundabat)." *

"As the story goes a man who was unknown to the world, and not able to think of any good deed whereby to bring himself into notice, set the temple of Diana on fire. And there being no one to show whose the sacrilege was, he came before the public himself, crying out that he had caused the conflagration. On being asked by the chief men of Ephesus what object he had in so doing, he answered: 'To gain an evil notoriety, since I could not obtain a good one.' Thus says the Greek story. But thou (Helvidius) hast set on fire the Temple of the Lord's Body, and defiled the Sanctuary of the Holy Ghost, by making out that a quaternion of brothers and a heap of sisters came out of it." †

"Thou sayest that Mary did not remain a virgin. I claim for myself more, that Joseph too was himself a virgin through Mary, that from a virginal marriage might be born a Virgin Son." ‡

PSEUDO-JEROME.

"Such was the splendour of Mary's life, as in a manner, to obscure the lives of all others, for as in comparison with God no one is good, so in comparison with the Lord's Mother, no creature is found perfect, even though it be shown to excel in virtues. One is our Father in heaven, one is our Mother on earth—one form of virtues—Mary." §

S. AUGUSTINE.

"When He the King of all nations was born, virginal dignity had its origin from the Lord's Mother, who both merited to have a Son, and merited also to remain a Virgin. . . . As Mary was chastely a wife, so was Joseph chastely a husband; and as she was chastely a Mother, so was he chastely a father." ||

"The Angel announces, the Virgin hears, believes, and conceives. Faith in the mind, Christ in the womb (fides in mente, Christus in ventre). A Virgin conceived, be hereat astonished. A Virgin brought forth, be still more astonished. After childbirth, a Virgin she remained, *Who shall declare His generation?*" ¶

"We believe then, in Jesus Christ Our Lord, born of the Holy Ghost from the Virgin Mary. By faith verily it was that the Blessed Mary conceived Him, whom by faith she brought forth. For when a Son was promised to her, she inquired how that might be, since she knew not man . . . and received for answer from the Angel: *The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee. And therefore also the Holy which shall be born of thee, shall be called the Son of God.* When the Angel had thus said, the Blessed Mary, full of faith, and conceiving Christ in her heart before she conceived Him in her womb (Christum prius mente

* *Epist.* lxxviii. *ad Fabiolam.* n. 2.
† *Adv. Helvidium, De Perpet. Virginit. B. M.* n. 16.
‡ *Ib.* n. 19, Patr. Lat. Tom. 23, p. 203.
§ *Ep. ad Eustoch. et Paul. de Assumpt.*, Int. Opp, S. Heron.
|| *Serm.* 51, n. 26. ¶ *Is.* liii. 8. *Serm.* 196, 1.

quam ventre concipiens), said, *Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it done to me according to thy word.* . . . Mary believed, and in her was done what she believed. Let us too believe, that so what was done, may profit us also." *

"Mary had made a settled purpose of virginity, and her husband, so far from detracting from her chastity, was its guardian. Or rather, since God was its guardian, her husband was the witness to her virginal purity; lest she should be thought to have conceived through adultery." †

"O truly full of grace! For thus was she saluted by the Angel, *Hail, full of grace.* Who can explain this grace? Who shall suffice to give thanks for this grace? Man is made; and by his free-will man is lost; and then is found, made man, He who made him, lest he should perish whom He made. In the beginning the Word, God with God, by Whom all things were made, is made flesh. *The Word was made flesh, and dwelt in us.*‡ The Word is made flesh, but flesh comes to the Word; the Word is not lost in flesh. O grace! That we should have this, how were we worthy?

"But see what the holy Mary says herself, full of faith, full of grace, she who, while she was to be a Mother, was to remain ever a Virgin. What does she say amongst other matters, of which to speak in detail would indeed be over-much? What did she say? *He hath filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he hath sent empty away.* Who are the hungry? The humble, the indigent. Who are the rich? The proud and inflated. . . ." §

"*Hail*, says the Angel, *full of grace, the Lord is with thee.* He is already with thee, Who shall be in thee. *Blessed art thou amongst women.* . . .

"A son is promised to Zachary, and a son is promised to holy Mary, and she too says almost the same words that Zachary had said. For what had Zachary said? *Whereby shall I know this? For I am an old man, and my wife barren, and advanced in years.*|| And what did Mary say? *How shall this be done?* The words are like, but the heart unlike. Whilst we hear what sounds like with our ear, we may recognise the heart to be unlike by the pronouncement of the Angel. . . . For in those words of Zachary the Angel saw there was not faith, but doubting and want of hope. This the Angel showed by breaking off the words, and condemning the unbelief. But holy Mary says, *How shall this be done, because I know not man?* See here the Virgin's settled purpose (propositum). For if it were to be with her as with all other mothers, she would not say, *How shall this be done?* But—mindful of what she had purposed, and conscious of her holy vow, since she knew what she had vowed—in saying, *How shall this be done, because I know not man*—for she knew not of children being born except to the married and by marital generation; and this was what she had firmly purposed not to know—in saying, *How shall this be done?* Mary asked the means how, but doubted not of God's omnipotence. *How shall this be done?* What is the way whereby this shall be done? Thou announcest to me a son; thou hast my mind ready; tell me the way. For the holy Virgin might fear, or at any rate not know, the counsel of God, how He willed her to have a son—as though He had rejected the Virgin's vow. For what if He should say: Marry, live as a

* *Serm.* 215, *De redditione Symboli.* See *Serm.* 245, 4.
† *Serm.* 225, 2. ‡ *John* i. 14.
§ *Serm.* 290, *In Nat. Joan. Bapt.* iv. 5, 6.
|| *Luke* i. 18. S. Augustine has: *Unde mihi hoc?*

wife? This God would not say, for He had accepted the Virgin's vow as God. And that too which He accepted from her, was His own gift.

"Tell me then, O messenger of God, *How shall this be done?* See now here the Angel aware that she is asking, not disbelieving.* And because he sees her asking and not disbelieving, he refuses not to be her instructor. Hear then, how: Thy virginity shall continue; only do thou believe the truth, keep virginity, receive integrity. Since thy faith is entire, intact shall be also thy integrity. Hear, in fine, how this shall be done: *The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee.* A shade such as this (tale umbraculum) knows no heat of concupiscence. *For this cause, because the Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee;* because thou conceivest by faith, because by believing, and not by conjugal intercourse, thou shalt be with child, *for this cause the Holy which shall be born of thee, shall be called the Son of God.*

"What art thou, thou who wilt presently bring forth? Whence hast thou merited, whence hast thou obtained this? Whence will be made in thee He who made thee? Whence, I say, comes to thee a so great boon (bonum)? Thou art Virgin, thou art holy, thou hast vowed a vow. True, much is what thou hast merited; nay rather, much is what thou hast received. But whence hast thou merited this? He is being made in thee, who made thee. He is being made in thee, by whom thou wast thyself made—nay rather, by whom were made heaven and earth, by whom all things were made. The Word of God is being made in thee flesh, by taking flesh, not by losing His Divinity. The very Word Himself is being joined to flesh; the very Word is being united to flesh; and the bridal chamber of this so great marriage is thy womb; yes, I say, of this so great marriage, that is, of the Word and Flesh, the bridal chamber is thy womb, whence *He the Bridegroom goes forth from His bridechamber.*† He finds thee Virgin at His conception, He leaves thee Virgin at His birth. He gives fecundity, He takes not away integrity. Whence hast thou this? Too pertly (protervè) I may seem to interrogate a Virgin, and rudely to strike, so to say, on bashful ears. But I see a Virgin, bashful indeed, but yet one who gives answer, and can admonish me. Dost thou ask me whence I have this? I blush to make answer to thee concerning my own blessedness (bonum); listen to the Angel's own salutation. Believe him, whom I believed. Askest thou whence I have this? Let the Angel reply. Tell me, Angel, whence has Mary this? I already said when I saluted her, *Hail, full of grace.*"‡

"Doubtless, she who merited to provide the price for man's redemption, has more power than all the other saints, to help the redeemed."§

"God does not dwell in any one whom the Holy Ghost has not first

* We may see how far any thought of fault or sin in Mary was from the mind of S. Augustine, by the pains he here takes all along to show the difference there was between her question to the Angel, and that of Zachary.

† *Ps.* xviii. 6.

‡ *Serm.* 291, *De Natali Joan. Bapt.* v. 4, 6. See also *Serm.* 287, 4, 293, 1.

§ Serm. 208, *De Annuntiat. Dominica*, Int. Opp. S. August. Appendix. The Sermons *In Nat. Dom.* and *De Annunt. Dom.*, placed in the Appendix, as not by S. Augustine, are some of them ascribed by critics to S. Maximus and S. Fulgentius. They abound with passages on the dignity and sanctity of the Blessed Virgin. See *Serm.* 120, 123, 194, 195.

sanctified and purified. And even so to Mary, that Blessed Virgin, was it said, *The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee*, no doubt to sanctify and purify her." *

S. CYRIL OF ALEXANDRIA.

"Hail, then, from us, O holy mystical Trinity, Who hast convoked us all to this Church of Mary the Mother of God. Hail, from us, Mary, Mother of God, majestic common-treasure of the whole world, the lamp unquenchable, the crown of virginity, the staff of orthodoxy, the indissoluble temple, the dwelling of the Illimitable, Mother and Virgin, through whom He in the holy Gospels is called the *Blessed who cometh in the Name of the Lord*. Hail, thou didst contain Him, who cannot be contained, in thy virginal womb; thou through whom the Holy Trinity is sanctified; through whom the precious Cross is celebrated and venerated throughout the world; through whom heaven rejoices, through whom angels and archangels are glad; through whom devils are put to flight, through whom Satan the tempter fell from heaven; through whom the fallen creature is received up into the heavens; through whom all creation, that was held fast by the madness of idolatry, hath come to the knowledge of the truth; through whom holy baptism has come to believers, and the oil of gladness; through whom the nations are brought to repentance. And what shall I say more? Through whom the Only-begotten Son of God hath shone forth for those who sat in darkness and in the shadow of death; through whom the Prophets foretold; through whom the Apostles preach salvation to the nations; through whom the dead are raised; and kings reign—by the power of the Holy Trinity. But who of men is able to speak of the much-hymned Mary? That virginal womb, Oh, how wondrous! . . ." †

"Who ever heard of an architect who built for himself a house, and was hindered from dwelling in it?" ‡

S. PROCLUS.

"Lo, Christ, who before the ages was born God from the Father in manner divine, is to-day born of the Virgin by a birth that accords with her. In heaven He came forth from the Father, without being divided from the Father on earth He comes forth from the stainless Virgin, without her suffering any loss of virginity. In heaven without mother, on earth without father. For the Holy Ghost Himself formed the living temple of the Word. O admirable sacrament of the divine economy! An earthly nature is made high as the heavens. O fruitful Virgin, who didst conceive from heaven! O Mother, that bearest the salvation of mankind! O womb, fashioned from earth, and at once the Creator's paradise! O Childbirth, whereby the world's sin is wiped out and done away! O mystery, whose depth and height I am unable to utter!" §

"*Where sin abounded, grace hath superabounded.*" || Mary, the holy Virgin

* *Collatio cum Maximino*, 21. See also *Contra quinque hæreses*, circ. med., Int. Opp. S. August. Tom. 8, Append. p. 6.

† *Hom.* iv., Patr. Gr. Tom. 77, p. 992. See also *Hom.* xi., p. 1032 sq.

‡ *Hom.* vi.

§ *Orat. in Commem. S. Stephani, Protomart. et de Sacram. œconomiæ, ac Deip. nativ.* ex cod. Syro-Chaldaic. Vatic. n. 358, ap. Passaglia, P. iii., p. 1045.

|| *Rom.* v. 20.

Mother of God, has called us here all together: that undefiled treasure of virginity; the spiritual paradise of the Second Adam; the workshop of the union of the [two] natures; the mart for the salutary exchange; the nuptial chamber wherein the Word espoused Flesh; the animated bush of nature which the fire of the Divine Childbirth did not consume,* the true light cloud that bore Him, who sits above the cherubim,† in a body of flesh; the most pure fleece of heavenly rain,‡ from which the Shepherd clothes the sheep. Mary, I mean, handmaid and Mother, Virgin and heaven; the only bridge of God to men; the awful loom of the Incarnation, wherein in ineffable manner that garment of union was wrought of which the Holy Ghost is weaver; the overshadowing power from on high, weaveress; the old fleece of Adam, the wool; the most pure flesh of the Virgin, the woof; the immense grace of her who bore the artificer, the weaving-shuttle—the Word, in fine, coming gently in from on high at the hearing of the ear. . . . For from her, whom He had formed for Himself without any flaw, He came forth, without contracting any stain. . . . womb, wherein was composed the authentic charter of man's common liberty. . . ." §

"She is the heavenly sphere of the new creation, in which the Sun of Justice ever-shining, has chased away from her whole soul all the night of sins." ||

S. THEODOTUS OF ANCYRA.

"In place of the virgin Eve who had been ministress of death, is chosen a virgin, most pleasing to God and full of God's grace, for the service of life: a virgin included in woman's sex, without part in woman's fault: a Virgin innocent, immaculate, free from all guilt, spotless, undefiled, holy in spirit and body;¶ as a lily blossoming among thorns;** unlearned in Eve's evil ways; unspoilt by feminine vanity . . . but who when yet unborn was already consecrated to God her Maker; and when born was offered up for grateful memorial, to abide as a holy nursling in His Sanctuary and temple, a disciple of His law, bedewed with the Holy Spirit, clad with divine grace as with a mantle, wise of soul in divine things, wedded in heart to God, breathing forth from her eyes the splendours of sanctity, her ears resounding with the voice of canticles, her tongue flowing with sweetness, her lips dropping honey, beautiful in her steps, more beautiful in her virtuous ways, venerable in her speech, more venerable in her carriage, gentle in her manners, more gentle in her conduct, good in sight of men, better in the eyes of God; as became her who received God in her womb, and in very deed gave birth to God. In a word she was all-fair, even as a will that is ever forward for good (ut propensa voluntas), and all suave as the perfumer's store.††

"Worthy of her Maker was she given to us by Divine Providence, not as one to encourage disobedience, but to lead the way to obedience; not to offer the fruit of death, but to provide the Bread of life; not as one wanton and

* *Exod.* iii. 2-4. † *Is.* xix. 1, *Ps.* lxxix. 2, xcviii. 1, *Is.* xxxvii. 16.

‡ *Judges* vi. 37-40, *Ps.* lxxi. 6.

§ Orat. *De laudib. S. Mariæ* i., Patr. Gr. Tom. 65.

|| *Ib.* p. 757. The sermons of S. Proclus superabound with the highest praises of Our Lady.

¶ 1 *Cor.* vii. 34. ** *Cant.* ii. 2. †† *Cant.* iii. 6, iv. 7.

light of spirit, but of robust sense, not soft of thought, but firm of mind. Hence she was one who could hold magnificent colloquy with an archangel, and confound the author of evil. Whilst she was in admiration at the angel's aspect, yet—a daughter very unlike her first parent Adam—she attended with prudence and caution to the tidings which the messenger brought her, lest haply, with wily blandness as of old, he makes his visit to her sanctuary, and the noxious violator is again daring to break into the house of God, as he did into Eden; and lest the auspicious news should prove to be fallacious.

"What then is the conduct of the heavenly Nuncio?

"Revealing in his noble countenance the inward sentiments which he conceives of the holy Virgin, and the high intelligence of his soul—admiring withal her composure—he weaves a crown, as of flowers, from the twofold material of joy and benediction; and standing erect, waving his hand, he offers his praise, crying out: *Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with thee: Blessed art thou,* most fair and most beautiful *among women. The Lord is with thee,* thou that art all-venerable, all-glorious, all-good. *The Lord is with thee,* O worshipful, incomparable One, exceeding every brightness, all-gleaming with splendours of light, God-worthy, ever blessed. Greatly do I marvel at thy modesty, most noble Lady.

"*Fear not, Mary,* espoused to God, dear pledge reared among the saints. Of no conception in iniquities, nor giving birth in sins am I come to tell thee, but to make known a joy that will take away the sorrow of Eve. No bringing forth in pains, nor delivery fraught with mourning do I announce, but a birth I foreshow, that will give consolation and joy. . . . For on thy account Eve's sadness has ceased; through thee error has departed, through thee has the curse been abolished; through thee Eve redeemed. For *Holy* is what is born of her who is holy. *Holy,* even the Lord who is Holy; *Holy,* even He whose it is to impart holiness. Singular, what is born of her who is singular; inexplicable, what comes from the inexplicable. *The Son of the Most High,* who is the offspring of her who is most high: not the work of flesh that wills,* but the effect of the Holy Ghost, shown to be no culture of man, but the power of the Most High. . . . *Hail then, Virgin full of grace,* amongst virgins Mother, and amongst mothers Virgin, of these and of those the figure and type, whilst in very truth surpassing both." †

"Why dost thou foolishly dissent from the truth, and reject God's decree, which in His wise providence He has ordained by the most holy Virgin for the common salvation? For He who formed the first virgin without reproach, Himself made also the second without fault or guilt: and He who made beautifully what is outside, also holily adorned throughout what is within for the soul's habitation. What, then, appeared to God most sweet and specially delectable, why dost thou with words of Jewish vanity presume to subvert as most shameful; whilst thou thyself art of all by far the most shameful? Thou man bedazed and most foolish, *who art thou that repliest against God?* ‡ For if it became God that He should create, and in such sort, as Himself to dwell in His own creation, as thou sayest; it was also becoming that He should be pleased to remain. With regard to this creation, the divine Scriptures con-

* *John* i. 13.

† Hom. vi. *In S. Deip. et in Natal. Dom.* Patr. Gr. Tom. 77, p. 1427.

‡ *Rom.* iv. 20.

tain and deliver all. Nothing in truth that is pleasing to God has aught of ignominy or reproach. God forbid: for *praise and magnificence* * is His divine and all-excellent work. One or other, then, of two things thou must do, either, in the same way as thou readily and rightly confessest the formation of Eve by God, receive also and adore what is most wisely affirmed of Him, *viz.*, His Incarnation from the Virgin—as do all the pious, if thou wouldest have part with them—or else, take to thyself the name of a Jew and an unbeliever, as being one of their number. For Christians, being such as are submissive to God, hearken to the divinely-inspired predictions of the prophets, which everywhere thus cry out concerning the Virgin most praised: *The Most High hath sanctified His own habitation, God is in the midst thereof, it shall not be moved,* and, *a man is born in her, and the Most High Himself hath founded her.*" †

"Hail thou who art clothed with light. Hail most stainless Mother of sanctity."

"O Dove, all-white and innocent! O holy temple of our hopes, wherein dwells all sanctity and magnificence." ‡

CHRYSIPPUS.

"At all times it is meet and right to proclaim blessed, to extol with praise and admiration, the ever-verdant rod of Jesse that brought life for fruit to the whole human race. . . . Gabriel has, indeed, made an end of his words of salutation. But most fitting is it that we should now ascribe and dedicate to her the happy acclamations of so many prophecies. Hail, then, ever; *hail, full of grace.* Hail, thou that hast received a womb that is above nature, and broader than the very heavens, since in it thou hast comprehended Him whom not even the heavens contain. Hail, source of the Light that illumines all men. Hail, rising of the Sun that knows no setting. Hail, armoury of life. Hail, thou who art the garden of the Father. Hail, thou who art the meadow of all the Holy Spirit's fragrance. Hail, root of all good things. Hail, ideal gem beyond all price. Hail, vine bearing beautiful grapes. Hail, the cloud of that rain which gives drink to the souls of the saints. Hail, thou well of ever-living water. Hail, thou bush burning with spiritual fire, yet that will in no way be burnt. Hail, closed gate open to the King alone. Hail, mountain whence without hands was cut out the Corner-stone. For with these and many such like titles do all who are under divine influence address her by turns." §

THEODORET.

"What matter could be more fitting for so great a formation [as the Incarnation of the Divine Word], than that of the Holy Virgin, within whom the Spirit of God wrought, from the elected flower of her most pure bowels, the body in which the Son of God lived and dwelt amongst men?"

* *Ps.* cx. 3. † *Ps.* xlv. 5, 6; lxxxvi. 5.

‡ Hom. iv. *In S. Deip. et Simeon. Ib.*, p. 1395.

§ *Orat. de laudib. Virginis*, Biblioth. Gr. Lat. T. ii., p. 424.

Consultationes Zachæi Christiani et Apollonii Philosophi, Lib. i. cap. x., Patr. Lat. Tom. 20, p. 1078.

S. MAXIMUS.

"An altogether fit dwelling is Mary for Christ, not by reason of the condition of body, but of original grace (Idoneum plane Maria Christo habitaculum, non pro habitu corporis, sed pro gratia originali). Hence when unladen of her happy load, Mary with joy recognises herself a Mother, she who knows not herself a wife; and she glories in offspring, who knows not a husband. She marvels at her having given birth to an infant, whilst she can attest that she has received the Holy Ghost. But she is not alarmed because without marriage she has given birth; for she has the testimony both of virginity and offspring. Her offspring shows the Lord's Father, whilst her virginity excuses the suspicion of those who are amazed. In the birth of our Saviour was fulfilled that divine saying: *By two or three witnesses every word shall stand.** For, lo, the Word of God is born by the testimony of the Trinity. For in the womb of holy Mary, since the Holy Ghost comes down, since the Most High overshadows, since Christ is engendered, is verily contained the confession of faith. For meet it was that the Mother who was to give forth salvation to the peoples, should first in her own bowels confirm the mystery of the Trinity; and thus we should understand that before the Saviour's birth the sacrament of faith had been confirmed. For Mary bore, so to speak, in the sanctuary of her womb and carried, together with the mystery, the priest. In truth, whatever was to be of profit in the world, all is from her womb; God, priest, and victim; God of resurrection, priest of oblation. Now all this we acknowledge in Christ. For God He is, in that He returns to the Father; High-priest, in that He offered Himself; Victim, in that He was slain for us. The womb of Mary—I will not call it womb, but temple; for evidently that is a temple, wherein dwells whatever there is that in heaven is holy. Nay above the heavens is to be accounted that wherein, as though in the more secret tabernacle, is set in order by the Deity the mystery whereby many may ascend to heaven. Yea verily above the heavens must Mary's womb be accounted, since it sent back the Son of God to heaven more glorious than He had come down from heaven. For thence He came to suffer, hence He returned to reign. Thence in humiliation He descended to man, hence in glory He ascended to the Father. Better assuredly is the temple of her body than that of heaven. For there Christ is seated awful, here manifest; there invisible, here visible and palpable; there He avenges sins, here He pardons them; there He uses the power of judge, here with love He encourages brethren. And consequently it is good for us to adore Him when He invites, that we may be able not to fear Him when He shall judge."†

S. BASIL OF SELEUCIA.

"Whoso would celebrate the holy Virgin and Mother of God, will find abundant materials for praise. But I, knowing my own weakness to be unequal to the mightiness of the reality, have for a long while refrained from very awe. . . . For I have not my lips purified with a coal from heaven, like Isaias who saw the Seraphim; nor have I, like the divine Moses, the feet of my soul bared of their covering."

* *Matt.* viii. 16.

† *Hom.* v. Patr. Lat. Tom. 57, p. 235. See *Serm.* liii., p. 637.

Proceeding in the same strain, and declaring that to sing fitly Our Lady's praises he must ascend above angels, and dominations, and powers, and cherubim, and seraphim, even to the Eternal Son, "thence beginning the praise of the Mother of God, whence she both is and is called, the Mother of God," he continues:—

"Yea, for what subject more sublime than this? No man can either conceive or speak of that which is the medium between what is divine and what is human. For as it is no easy matter, either to conceive or speak of God—yea rather, it is a thing utterly impossible—so is the great mystery of the Mother of God above all thought and speech."

Then follows a prayer to God for help, and he thus proceeds:

"How shall I attempt the Virgin ocean, and search into the depths of the mighty mystery, if thou, O Mother of God, teach not me—who am like an untried swimmer—*to put off the old man which is corrupted according to the desires of error*;* if thou in mercy dost not fill the mouth of my understanding, that I may penetrate to the depths of thy child-bearing; so that being surrounded with the light of thy mercy, I may find the pearl of truth within thee. Do thou then aid me to the obtaining of this mighty thing, that being taught by thee, I may be able to speak concerning thee, not as to *how* thou didst bring forth the Incarnate Word—for the manner of thy parturition is beyond any *how*—save that thou wert both a mother and remainedst a virgin. What tongue then is there so eloquent as worthily to hymn her praises? For through her name we have merited great blessings. With what flowers of eulogy shall we weave a garland befitting her? For of her the flower of Jesse germinated, and crowned our race with glory and honour. What gifts shall we offer worthy of her, of whom all the things of this world are not worthy? For if Paul says of the other saints, *Of whom the world was not worthy*,† what shall we say of the Mother of God, who outshines all the martyrs as much as does the sun the stars?

"O Virginity, through which angels that were aforetime averse from our race, now rejoice at being sent to minister thereto; and Gabriel is gladdened at being intrusted with the announcement of the divine conception. Wherefore from that joy and all-hail let our address begin. *Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with thee*. . . . Hail, full of grace, thou who didst mediate between God and man, that the partition-wall of enmity might be taken away, and the earthly be made one with the heavenly."

Thus he continues, at some length, imagining a colloquy between the Angel Gabriel and the Blessed Virgin: he then adds:

"You see how great was the mystery wrought, in that she surpassed all laws and thought. Who then must not be in astonishment at the exceeding glory of the Mother of God, and how greatly she excels all those whom we honour as saints? For if Christ bestowed such great grace upon His servants that not only by their touch they healed the sick, but also by their very shadow—since we learn from the Acts that even Peter's shadow cured diseases, and that some one with a handkerchief of Paul expelled evil spirits—what power

* *Ephes.* iv. 22. † *Heb.* xi. 38.

must we not think His Mother has? Is it not far greater than that of inferiors? Every one knows it is. We might question, indeed, whether it is any wonder that the saints should be able to do such great things when living, and that the earth does not hide away their power with them: for we know that even the very stones which conceal their bodies avail to save men in straits, provided they approach them worthily. Now if Christ so highly favoured His servants the Saints, enabling them to work such marvels, with what gifts of grace has He not adorned His Mother? If Peter was pronounced Blessed, and entrusted with the keys of the kingdom of heaven, ought not she to be proclaimed Blessed above all others who was accounted worthy to give birth to Him whom Peter confessed? If Paul was called a vessel of election because he was to carry the august name of Christ, and preach it everywhere throughout the world, what sort of vessel must the Mother of God be? Not like the golden pot that contained the manna, but bearing in her womb the heavenly Bread that is given to the faithful for their nourishment and strengthening. But let us beware lest whilst I would fain say more concerning her, I be more put to shame, by not attaining to her dignity. Wherefore having lowered the sails of my discourse, I will hasten into the safe harbour of silence, first addressing a few words to those who have assembled here. Many good things, and which surpass all language, accruing to us through the Mother of God, let us make a return to our benefactress, a return which will revert unto ourselves. What return do I mean? That love towards one another which is *the fulfilment of the law*. . . . But before all things, let us preserve the body of the Church undivided, preserving inviolate the treasure of oneness of mind. . . . And being linked together in the bonds of charity, let us offer up to the Mother of God such words as these: 'O all holy Virgin, of whom whoso utters all that is venerable and glorious, errs not against the truth, but against thy dignity (or worth), mayest thou, looking down from on high propitiously upon us, govern us now in peace; but after having led us to the throne of judgment, free from shame, make us—rapt unto heaven—partakers of the station at His right hand; and there with the angels we shall sing the uncreated and consubstantial Trinity, that in the Father, and in the Son, and in the Holy Ghost is confessed and glorified now and ever, to ages and ages. Amen.' *

"Divine Providence has given to us Mary, worthy of her Maker, winner of good things, a grand-daughter very unlike to Adam. . . . *Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with thee, Blessed art thou*, who art all-venerable, all-glorious, all-good. *The Lord is with thee.* Worshipful thou art, incomparable, exceeding all brightness, dazzling with light, worthy of God, and to be called Blessed." †

HESYCHIUS.

"With good reason does every grateful tongue salute the Virgin and Mother of God, and thus, as far as possible, imitate Gabriel, prince of angels. Thus one says to her, *Hail*, and another: *The Lord is of thee*, (ὁ Κύριος ἐκ σοῦ), on account of Him who was born of her, and appeared as Our Lord in flesh to the human race. . . .‡ Again, others call her the Lamp without

* Orat. x. *De Annunt. Deip.*, Patr. Gr. Tom. 85, p. 448.

† *Orat. in Christi Nativit.* 12.

‡ See for what is here omitted, *supra* in *Cant.* vi. 8.

orifice that burns of itself, the Ark, wider, longer, and more famous than that of Noe. . . .* The prophets therefore vie one with another in their praises of thee, O Virgin, and of the God-bearer (*τὴν θεοφόρον*) each one speaks who believed in the mysteries of marvel. Thus one calls thee the Rod of Jesse,† to image forth the invulnerability and inflexibility of thy virginity. Another compares thee to the Bush that burned, and was not consumed,‡ to typify the flesh of the Only-begotten, and the Virgin Mother of God. For she was on fire, and yet was not consumed, since she brought forth, and at the same time her womb was not opened. . . . One calls thee the closed Gate set at the East, that lets in the King with doors shut . . . at the East, because *the true Light that enlighteneth every man coming into the world*, went forth from thy womb, as from a royal bride-chamber. . . . Another called thee an enclosed garden and a fountain sealed, even He the Spouse who was born of thee, and spoke before in the Canticles. . . .

"*Arise, Lord, into Thy rest, Thou and the Ark of Thy sanctification*,§ which is very evidently the Virgin Mother of God. For if Thou art the Pearl, with good reason is she the Ark. Because Thou art the Sun, the Virgin is necessarily called Heaven. Because Thou art the unfading Flower, the Virgin surely is the plant of incorruption, and the paradise of immortality. It was of her that Isaias seeing these things, fore-announced of old: *Behold, the Virgin shall conceive, and shall bring forth a Son, and they shall call His name Emmanuel. Behold, the Virgin:* What sort of Virgin? The most preferred of all women, the elect out of all virgins, the august pride of our nature, the boasted glory of our clay, she who rescued Eve from shame, and Adam from the threatening doom, and cut off the dragon's bold licence of speech (*τὴν παρρησίαν*); she, whom no fume of concupiscence touched, nor worm of voluptuousness harmed (*ἧς κάπνος ἐπιθυμίας οὐχ ἥψατο, οὔδε σκώληξ αὐτὴν ἡδυπαθείας ἔβλαψεν*). *Behold, the Virgin shall conceive in her womb.* From whence, O prophet? I say not, he replies. For this was reserved to Gabriel. Many have set forth in part the marvels of God's Mother, yet many of these are passed over. My office it is to give assurance of the childbirth of the Ever-Virgin. Micheas tells the place wherein the marvel was accomplished. David the time. For he has inserted in the prophecy of the Psalms the words: *From the womb before the day-star I begot Thee.*|| Gabriel then will tell the *whence*. For he it is who comes down from heaven, for this very purpose is he sent to the Virgin. He is present at the time of the childbirth, and is believed necessarily to have explained the substance of the birth. . . ."¶

S. FULGENTIUS.

"Since the devil speaking by the serpent to Eve, through the ears of Eve brought death to the world, God by an angel sent the word to Mary, and poured forth life on all the ages. The Angel uttered his speech, and the Virgin conceived Christ. With this splendour is the Son of God conceived, with this purity is He generated. The heavenly Physician passing through the Virgin, caused the Virgin to remain scatheless after His transit. For if by His touch He could restore disjointed limbs in others, how much more was

* See *supra*, p. 74. † *Is.* xi. 1. ‡ *Exod.* iii. 2-6.
§ *Ps.* cxxxi. 8. || *Ps.* cix. 3.
¶ Serm. v. *De S. Maria Deip.* Patr. Gr. Tom. 93, pp. 460-4.

He able not to violate by His birth, what in His own Mother He found perfect and entire. Nay, by her childbirth the integrity of her body increased rather than diminished, and her virginity was enhanced so far from being lost.

"Listen to with what three most glorious goods Mary was exalted, namely, that of the angelic salutation, the divine benediction, and the fulness of grace. For thus we read the Angel saluted her: *Hail, Mary, full of grace, blessed art thou amongst women.*" *

EARLY LITURGIES.

"Hail, Mary, full of grace: the Lord is with thee, blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, for thou didst bear the Saviour of our souls."

"Hail in the highest, our all-holy, pure, most blessed, glorious Lady, the God-Mother, and ever-Virgin Mary.

"Verily it is becoming to bless thee, the God-bearing, the ever-blessed, and all-blameless, and Mother of our God, more honourable than the cherubim, and incomparably more glorious than the seraphim: thee who didst bear with purity God the Word, thee the true God-Mother, we magnify."

"In thee, full of grace, all creation rejoices, the host of angels, and the race of men; hallowed temple, and spiritual paradise, pride of virgins, of whom God was made Flesh; and our God, who was before eternity, became a little child: for He made thy womb His throne, and thy belly broader than the heavens. In thee, O full of grace, all creation rejoices: glory unto thee."†

* *De laud. Mariæ ex partu Salvatoris.* Int. Opp. S. Fulgentii.

† *The Divine Liturgy of James*, Ante-Nicene Christian Library, vol. xxiv., p. 33. See also *Ib.*, p. 43, and *The Divine Liturgy of Mark*, p. 60, where is again the "Hail Mary," and an especial commemoration of "Our all-holy, pure, and Blessed Lady, Mary the Virgin Mother of God."

CHAPTER IV.

THE SANCTITY OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN (*continued*). MARY'S ENTIRE SINLESSNESS.

The general impression that we think any one would form from reading what by far the great majority of the Fathers have written concerning Our Lady's sanctity is, that in their minds Mary and sin are as far apart as the poles are asunder. She stands out in the patristic view as the very impersonation of sinlessness and innocence. The Fathers' multiplied praises, moreover, of her grace and sanctity, which read at times as almost exaggerations, appear absolutely to exclude the notion of sin of any sort attaching to her in their thoughts; and to suggest that much more would they have recoiled in horror at the bare idea of her having been ever, even for one moment, under Satan's dominion; or that the original curse had part in her, whom they uniformly set forth as emphatically that Blessed One who was the source and beginning of all benediction to the whole world.

So much we should gather at least negatively from patristic teaching in general. But besides this, Our Lady's sinlessness, whether as regards all actual sin even venial, or original sin also, is in various ways, both implicitly and explicitly, affirmed positively by many of the Fathers.

1. We have shown in a former chapter that the teaching of Mary's original sinlessness and grace is implicitly contained in the earliest tradition concerning her, as the Second Eve.

2. There is the celebrated passage of S. Augustine in which he says, that he will have no question whatever of sins, that is, sin of any kind, raised in reference to the Mother of God.

3. Several of the Fathers expressly affirm that the Blessed Virgin never committed any actual sin whatever.

4. Some of them speak of Mary's sanctification before birth in her mother's womb,* without however saying anything definitely

* See above, p. 138, S. Peter Chrysologus, on *Luke* i. 27; S. Theodotus of Ancyra, p. 221.

one way or the other, as to whether this was at, or after her conception. But here we should well remark, that none of them ever speak of her, as they do of John the Baptist, as having been sanctified in the womb from a previous state of sin. Hence it is fair to conclude that they held there was an essential difference in the two cases, and that Our Blessed Lady was in their view at no time under sin, but was sanctified by grace in the first moment of her conception.

5. There are a few passages of Fathers within the first six centuries which may be said indubitably to affirm in express terms the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin—notably one in the *Carmina Nisibena*, where S. Ephrem places her sinlessness in a category apart by itself together with that of Jesus Christ alone, and speaks of it as unique and without parallel amongst all other Saints.*

6. It may be objected that a contrast is sometimes made by certain Fathers between the Conception of Our Lord Jesus Christ, and that of His Blessed Mother, and that she is spoken of as, unlike Him, conceived in sinful flesh. We give at the end of this Chapter several passages from S. Augustine and S. Fulgentius which bear on this distinction. Their words may however be interpreted to refer to the active conception in either case, and to the *debitum* of original sin which was incurred remotely by Our Blessed Lady, but prevented by a special privilege of grace from taking effect. And there was, of course, an essential difference between the human conception of Mary, and that of her Divine Son by the Holy Ghost. This then, it seems most probable, is in these places the matter of distinction. We should, besides, bear in mind that there is in them no question of any infection of sin as regards the soul.

7. There are perhaps comparatively but few passages in the Fathers of the first six centuries wherein Our Lady's Immaculate Conception is expressly and *ex professo* asserted, or from which it can be necessarily deduced with absolute strictness—since, however great the purity, grace, and sanctity that may be actually predicated of her, this is of course compatible with the hypothesis that she had contracted the stain of original sin. Still there are many arguments and words of the Fathers which really imply the Blessed Virgin's entire sinlessness, and passages from their writings may be cited almost without number which, taken in

* See also S. Ambrose, and S. Maximus, in the last Chapter, pp. 215, 224.

their obvious sense, seem to bear it out. Several of those which we have given as illustrating Mary's habitual grace and sanctity are of this nature, besides many others scattered here and there in these volumes, especially in the Chapters on Scriptural Exegesis. We here append such passages only as, we consider, directly affirm Our Lady's immunity from original sin Those from S. Ephrem are of the greatest value, not only as being the most explicit, but especially because his teaching on original sin is uniformly more clear and precise than that of perhaps any other Father, except S. Augustine, during the first six centuries. As regards S. Augustine, whilst we grant that nowhere can he be shown absolutely to affirm this privilege of Our Lady, still we hold that he has clearly laid down the premisses from which it may be strictly inferred. The late Rev. J. B. Morris has in our opinion so well and exhaustively proved this, that we have thought we could not do better than give his arguments intact in his own words, and without adding anything of our own.

S. HIPPOLYTUS.

"The Saviour Himself was the ark of incorruptible woods. Since thereby is signified His tabernacle that knows not corruption nor decay, that is, engenders no corruption of sin. For the sinner confesses: *My sores are putrified and corrupted because of my foolishness.** But the Lord was without sin, being covered around by incorruptible woods as regards His humanity; that is, He was inwardly out of the Virgin and the Holy Ghost, and outwardly out of the Word of God, covered as with the purest gold."†

"In this remarkable passage it will be observed that Our Lady is the wood out of which Our Lord's Sacred Humanity was made. She is one of the factors out of which His sinlessness is derived. Nor can it be said that the incorruption of this wood alludes to

* *Ps.* xxxvii. 6.

† Fragment. In *Ps.* xii. ap. Theodoret. *Dial.* i. Patr. Gr. Tom. 82, p. 609, et 83, p. 85. S. Irenæus in a fragment (ap. S. Joan. Damasc. *Contra Jacobit.* Tom. 94. p. 1486) expresses the same idea. S. Hippolytus exhibits frequently, in the fragments of his writings that have survived, a singular piety and devotion to the Virgin Mother of God. This he received as a heritage that came down from the Apostle S. John to Polycarp, from Polycarp to Irenæus, from Irenæus to himself and others.

Our Lady's virginity. In the mind of Hippolytus it refers as much to her sinless soul as to her corporal integrity; for it is his opinion, in common with many others of his time, that souls were derived from each other, so that not only the body but the soul of Jesus came from Mary.*

"Furthermore, according to this view, the taint of original sin was derived from soul to soul, so that, if she had been stained, so also would He have been tainted, or at least that taint would have been due to Him. Above all, the same word (ἄσηπτος) is used of her sinlessness and of His, and as in Him it is explained to be that which by its nature generated no corruption, so it must be interpreted in her. It is not only incorruption, but incorruptibility. The nature of the wood is to be incorrupt. That which is most striking here, is the unquestioning and bold parallel between her sinlessness and His. As His sinlessness included the Immaculate Conception, so must hers. As in His case, undoubtedly, to be incorruptible meant to be Immaculate, so it must be in the case of Mary." †

S. EPHREM.

The following passage of S. Ephrem is taken from the *Carmina Nisibena*, first published by Dr. Gustavus Bickell in 1866 from the Syriac MS. in the British Museum, of which he also gives a Latin translation:—

"Verily indeed Thou and Thy Mother, alone are you, in being in every respect altogether beautiful. For in Thee, Lord, is no spot, nor any stain in Thy Mother. But my children are by no means like to these two beauties." ‡

"S. Ephrem," says the learned Editor, "is here speaking in the person of the Church of Edessa, who had just before called herself beautiful, and been finding fault with her children. It is hardly necessary to prove that S. Ephrem in this passage attributes to the Blessed Virgin immunity not only from actual,

* Gallandius, ii. 469. † *Dublin Review*, April, 1868, p. 340.

‡ "Revera quidem Tu et Mater Tua, vos soli estis, qui omni ex parte omnino pulchri sint. In Te enim, Domine, non est labes, nec ulla in Matre Tua macula. Filii autem mei his duabus pulchritudinibus minime similes sunt." *S. Ephraemi Syri Carmina*, Lipsiæ 1866.

but also from original sin. For he ascribes to her a sanctity such as she shares with Christ alone, and of which all the rest of men are devoid. S. Ephrem moreover elsewhere uniformly gives the first place to infants who have died after baptism without actual sin, and maintains that they surpass all the Saints in honour and dignity.* If then it were here a question only of actual sin, the Virgin Mary would not be alone with Christ in the possession of this immunity, but would have to be relegated to the same rank as infants who had died after baptism. Here, therefore, by the emphatically reiterated denial of all sin, by the comparison with the sinlessness of Christ, and by the opposition made to all other men, we have the direct testimony of S. Ephrem to Mary's Immaculate Conception. There are several other testimonies, though less direct, to the same effect, to be found in the Saint's writings.† Thus he says: –

"'Those two innocent, those two simple ones, Mary and Eve, had been, indeed, quite equal the one to the other: but afterwards one became the cause of our death, the other of our life.'‡

"Here the Saint clearly affirms that Mary was constituted equally pure from all sin of any kind, and in the same integrity as Eve before the fall. Similarly we read:—

"'It is plain that Mary is the gate of life, because by her the world and its inhabitants have been illumined, who had been darkened by Eve the cause of all evils. They are like to a body one eye of which is blind and darksome, and the other pure and luminous enlightening all things. Lo, to the world are affixed two eyes: Eve the blind eye, the left, whilst Mary is the eye full of light, the right,' etc.§ And: 'There was lost by Eve, and restored by Mary, that beautiful and desirable glory which had departed from Eve and Adam.' And: 'The foolish Mother is the fountain of our miseries, but her prudent sister is the treasury of our joys.'¶ So again he says that 'Adam by means of the new Eve entered again into paradise.'** He also compares her to heaven.††

"We should remark moreover the words:—

* See *Opp. Syr.* Tom. iii. 300 c.; 582 f.; and *Carm. Nisib.* 62, 23. "For your infants and children will come forth first in the resurrection, as the first-fruits, and after them the just as victors."

† "In what follows we take no notice of S. Ephrem's Greek Works, because by some their authenticity is doubted, though we judge them for the greatest part to be genuine. It is well known that they abound in praises of the Blessed Virgin. It should moreover be noted that S. Ephrem's doctrine on this point is all the more valuable on account of the holy Doctor's more clear and accurate teaching on the question of original sin."

‡ *Opp. Syr.* Tom. ii., p. 327a. § *Opp. Syr.* ii. 329.
|| *Ib.* 318. ¶ *Ib.* 321. ** *Ib.* 326. †† iii. 150e.

"'In every way hast Thou fully adorned her, O Glory of Thy Mother.'* And: 'The virgin earth brought forth the first Adam, the head of earth; a Virgin also has brought forth to-day the new Adam, the head of heaven.'†

"Now the earth is called virgin precisely because it had not been cursed by God: consequently the comparison demands that Mary was not subjected to the curse of sin.‡

"Hardly any other Church taught always the sinlessness of Mary so constantly and unanimously as the Syrian. We give here the testimony of S. James of Sarug in the next century, who lays down the following conclusion as though an axiom:—

"'If there had been in Mary's soul any stain or defect, God would have assuredly chosen for Himself another woman for His Mother, who should be free from all spot.'§

"In the Office of the Syrians the liturgical hymns which he composed for his Church, are still recited by the priests, and amongst them is the following invocation to Our Lady:—

"'Help us, O thou peace-bearer, most beautiful amongst women. . . . Be near at hand in peace, O justice that was never injured. Peace be with thee, O new Eve, who didst give birth to Emmanuel.'||

"The following is also ascribed to S. James in the Office of the Maronites:—

"'O ship that broughtest goods and treasures from the Father, and hast arrived, thou hast emptied thy riches into our sterile region.'

"In the same Office of the Maronites we read:—

"'Peace be with thee, O beloved daughter, who hast covered the nakedness of thy father who was made naked in paradise, thou who hast also paid the debt of all generations and peoples; and didst bring back thy father to that place whence he went forth.'¶

"Again, the following, perhaps the most clear of all:—

"'Be nigh at hand, O thou peace-making one: O new vessel of Eliseus, whereby (or, wherein) has been sweetened that bitter venom which the serpent poured forth amid the trees.'**

"But it is especially worthy of note, that even the Nestorians, otherwise so unjust to the Mother of God, and inclined to ration-

* ii. 423 f. Compare with this the second passage from S. Epiphanius in preceding Chapter.

† *Ib.* 397a.

‡ See also iii. 601, c.d., *Bibl. Or.* i. 90. Compare with this the extract from the *Epistle of the Presbyters*, etc., *on the Martyrdom of S. Andrew*, given in the last Chapter.

§ Jacob. Sarug, *De S. Virg. Deip.*, Serm. iii., ap. Assemani, *Bibl. Or.*, T. i. 130. S. James of Sarug, or Batnæ, was born in 452, and died in 519. The Catholics of Syria venerate him as one of their greatest Saints and Doctors.

|| *Ib.*, p. 292. ¶ *Ib.*, p. 476. ** *Ib.*, p. 25.

alism, have preserved their ancient tradition, as appears not only from their liturgical books, in which are many indirect testimonies, but also from the express statement of George Varda, their most celebrated hymnographer, who flourished about the beginning of the thirteenth century.* He says:—

"'Mary was already sanctified in the very moment of her conception. She alone was preserved from the universal deluge of sin; and remained dry and unmoistened as the fleece of Gedeon.' †

"S. James of Sarug says, again:—

"'Mary alone was pure and without spot. As virginity in her body, so sanctity in her soul, was perpetual.'" ‡

S. AMBROSE.

See the passage quoted above (Chap. iii., p. 215) where the holy doctor says that Christ chose Mary as a vessel for Himself not from earth but from heaven—and also the passage quoted by Father Morris *infra*, p. 245.

S. PETER CHRYSOLOGUS.

See Serm. 140 and 142, *supra*, pp. 137, 138.

THE TYPICON OF S. SABAS.

"S. Sabas," writes Cave, "flourished A.D. 484; he was born A.D. 439. . . . S. Sabas wrote his Typicon for the use of his monastery, as an Ordo for reciting the Ecclesiastical Office throughout the year. It contains 59 Chapters, and soon came into use in all the Jerusalem monasteries." §

Amongst the Feasts therein noted is that of the Conception of the Blessed Virgin, in these words: *The Conception* [*i.e.* active] *of S. Anne, mother of the Deipara.* ||

S. AUGUSTINE.

"We find up and down S. Austin's works," writes Fr. J. B. Morris, "several statements to the effect that Christ took flesh of a *woman*, because He was minded to honour both sexes. Now

* See concerning him *Bibl. Or.* iii., P. i., p. 561.

† These words are cited by Joseph Uard Patriarch of the Chaldees in *Pareri de' Vescovi* iii., p. 177. They are doubtless taken from the hymn of Varda on the Blessed Virgin, which is extant in Cod. Amid. i. (see *Bibl. Or.* i., p. 581), and from which also Joseph II. Patriarch of the Chaldees, quotes (*B. O.* iii., P. i., p. 607).

‡ J. B. Abbeloos, *De vit. et script. S. Jacob. Episc.*, Sect. v. ex Cod. Vatic. Loviani, 1867, p. 189.

§ *Script. Eccl. Hist.* T. i., p. 457.

|| See Passaglia, *De Immac. Concept.*, P. iii., p. 1108, who testifies that in the Appendices at the end of copies of the Evangelia, dating previously to the year 800, the same Feast is noted, and also in the most ancient Menæa.

this is a position which may mean a good deal to our purpose, and may mean a very little. It may mean, that Christ honoured the whole male sex as a body, by taking flesh and becoming one of that sex; and the whole female sex, by taking that flesh not from the earth, not from the stones—out of which He *could*, had He been pleased, have raised up children to Abraham—not from anywhere, but from a woman. In this way such a statement would mean very little. But a similar statement might mean a great deal more. It might mean, that Christ carried out His scheme of redemption in such a way as to honour both sexes in those two persons in particular, through whom it was carried out: that as Eve was originally inferior to Adam, and dependent on him for her creation in such way that without him she would not have existed; so Mary was inferior to Christ, and dependent on Him for her re-creation; but that as Adam and Eve were both made upright, and both sexes dishonoured by the Fall, so by the restoration of man both sexes might be honoured in the two persons immediately concerned in it.

"This indeed appears to me to be the vision before the Church's mind from the first, and the only language which will adequately support the language, say, of Irenæus or of the others who regard Mary as the counterpart of Eve. But what I wish to observe here is, that it is very possible for one and the same writer to use the same expression in different senses. The statement when it means its least, is not contradictory to the statement when it means its most, but compatible with it. It is no reason whatever, because there *is* a minimum of meaning, that that minimum should be looked upon as the corrective of an apparent maximum, and the standard to which the latter is, as a matter of course, to be reduced. This premised, I shall proceed to give some passages of both kinds.

"In one of his early sermons he writes as follows:—

"'We profess that the whole nature of body comes from God, its Almighty Creator; and consequently, wherever our Lord took His body from, He would be taking it from His own creation; but in His humiliation He preferred taking it from a woman, as He had come to liberate that lost creature which had fallen through a woman. Hence as He wished to raise the hope of renovation and restoration in both sexes, He chose the male sex to be born in it, and the female to be born through it. You that shudder at the chaste womb of a Virgin, choose, I pray you, where God should take His body from. You say that every body is the substance of *the race of darkness:* choose then, as I said, where God ought to take His body from.'*

* *Serm.* 12, 12.

"This is a sermon in which he is arguing against the Manichees. Here he seems to be putting things at the lowest, much as when he says in a sermon on the Resurrection:—

"'Because man fell through the female sex, by the female sex man was repaired: because a Virgin had been Mother to Christ, woman announced that He had risen again. By woman came death, and by woman life.'*

"Again:—

"'Who would say that the Word of God by whom all things were made, could not have made for Himself flesh even without a mother, just as He made the first man without father and mother? But since it was Himself who created both sexes, male and female, He therefore willed, even in His birth, to honour the two sexes which He came to redeem. You know doubtless how in the fall of the first man the serpent did not dare to speak to the man, but made use of the woman's service to make him fall. By the weaker one he got hold of the stronger: and by making an entrance through the one he triumphed over both. To prevent therefore our regarding our death through woman with horror—and as though we were moved thereto by a just indignation—and believing her irreparably damned; the Lord, in coming to seek what was lost, was willed to show His favour and honour to both sexes, since both were lost. In neither sex therefore ought we to do wrong to the Creator. The Lord's birth has encouraged both to hope for salvation. The honour of the male sex is in the flesh of Christ; the honour of the female sex is in the Mother of Christ. The grace of Jesus Christ has obtained the victory over the serpent's cunning.'†

"Again:—

"'For this end it was that Our Lord became Son of man, and became so, by being born of woman. But would He have less accomplished this end had He not been born of the Virgin Mary? For some one may say: True, He willed to become man, but He might have been so without being born of a woman at all, for He had no need of woman to create the first man. . . . But here we might ask the question, Why should He avoid being born of a woman? Suppose I cannot show you why He chose to be born of a woman; you show me what there was in woman that He should shun. But I have already said, that if He were to shun the womb of woman, it would look like hinting the possibility of His being contaminated by her. But the more incapable of stain He was through His own substance, so much the less must He needs have dreaded the womb of flesh, as if there were any chance of His contracting a stain therefrom: whereas by being born of a woman, He must needs have shown us some great mystery. For indeed, brethren, we too confess, that if the Lord had wished to become man so as not to be born of a woman, it was surely easy to His Majesty. For as He was able to be born from a woman without a man, so He was able to be born without a woman either. But what He showed us is this, that human creatures were not to despair of themselves in any sex, seeing that both males and females belong to a human sex. If then, being a man, as He must needs have been, He were not to be born of a woman, women might despair of themselves, recollecting

* *Serm.* 232, 2.

† Serm. 190, *In Nat. Dom.* vii. n. 2.

that the first sin was theirs, because the first man was deceived by a woman, and would fancy that they had no hope in Christ themselves whatever. He came then a man, to choose first the male sex; and being born of a woman, to console the female sex; as if speaking to them and saying: That you may know that no creature of God is bad, but that an evil pleasure perverts it, in the beginning when I made man, I made him male and female; I condemn not the creature which I made. See, I am born a man; see, I am born from a woman. It is not then the creature I made which I condemn, but the sins which I made not. Let either sex see its own honour, and either confess its own iniquity, and either hope for salvation. When man was to be deceived, the poison was rendered to him by woman. Let woman make compensation for the sin of man whom she deceived, by giving birth to Christ. Hence too it was women who were the first to tell the Apostles of God rising again. A woman told death to her husband in paradise; women told salvation to men in the Church. The Apostles were to tell the Resurrection of Christ to the Gentiles; women told it to the Apostles. So let nobody calumniate Christ for being born of a woman, from which sex the Redeemer would not be stained, and which sex the Creator ought to commend. . . . A woman brought tidings of death to her husband in paradise. Women, too, have brought tidings of salvation to their husbands in the Church.' *

"Further on in the same sermon he says of Mary:—

"'She had *merited* to bring forth the Son of the Most High, and yet was most humble: nor did she put herself before her husband, even in the order of name, so as to say, I and Thy father; but Thy father and I. She does not attend to the dignity of the womb, but to her rank as a wife. For the humble Christ had not taught His Mother to be proud.' †

"Elsewhere he spoke of the Virgin Mother:—

"'Who did not conceive by the law of the flesh of sin, that is, by the motion of carnal concupiscence, but pre-*merited* by pious faith for the holy seed to come into her.' ‡

"And even in one of the passages just given he says:—

"'*Because* a Virgin had been Mother to Christ, a woman announced that He had risen again.'

"Although then S. Austin does use words which admit of a minimum of meaning, they also admit of a maximum, and all he says would be perfectly true and reasonable, even if he thought all the while that Mary had earned woman all these privileges by her merits with Christ. Of other Christians he says:—

"'However, if you think about it, it was He that first gave the faith whereby you pre-merited Him, for you did not pre-merit of your own stock, so that anything should be due to you.' §

"What he would say of Mary, we may perhaps see better by and by.

* *Serm.* 51, 2, 3.
† *Ib.* 18.
‡ *De pecc. mer. et rem.* ii.
§ *In Joann.* Tr. iii. 10.

"'What,' he says in another place, 'if the Almighty created a human nature formed anywhere, but not from a mother's womb, and suddenly brought it before our eyes? What if He underwent no changes from childhood to youth, took no food, no sleep? Would He not countenance the idea of some misconception, and be believed not to have in any true sense taken human nature, and while He was doing all things miraculously, be taking away what He did mercifully? But as it is, He appeared in such way Mediator between God and man, as in the oneness of His person to unite both natures and to lift things ordinary aloft to things extraordinary, and temper things extraordinary by the ordinary.' *

"Here the same thought, it may be said, is at the Saint's elbow, as it were.

"Again:—

"'The reason why we believe He was born of the Virgin Mary is not because He could not exist in true flesh, and be seen by men in any other way, but because it is so written in Scripture, which, unless we believe, we can neither be Christians, nor be saved. We believe, then, that Christ was born of the Virgin Mary, because it is so written in the Gospel: we believe that Christ was crucified and dead, because it is so written in the Gospel: and truly born and truly dead, because the Gospel is truth.† But why He was pleased to suffer all He did, in flesh taken from a woman's womb, is a design the whole of which He alone is privy to. Whether it was that He thought fit that the sexes He had created should be each commended and honoured in this manner by His taking the form of a man, and being born from a woman; or whether it was from some other cause, what that cause was, I cannot say at random.' ‡

"Again:—

"'If it had never been [as it was], and the Lord Christ had pleased to come in flesh not taken from a Virgin, but still in real flesh to redeem us from real death, who would venture to say that He could not have done it? But what He did was the better way, to wit, to be born of a Virgin, and to deign to commend by His birth either sex for the ransom of which He was to die, by having His own male body born from a woman, by so doing, speaking in a special way against you [Manicheans], and overthrowing you who preach that male and female is the work not of God, but of the devil.' §

"When we come to read S. Austin's works on grace," continues Fr. Morris, "we find this remarkable feature in them, that as there are occasions upon which it might have been expected that a belief in Mary's privilege [of Immaculate Conception] would have led to the mention of her, so there are occasions where a disbelief in it would have led also to the mention of her.

* *Epist.* 137, 9.

† "It is well to remind the reader, why S. Austin believed the Gospel itself. 'I should not believe the Gospel, unless the authority of the Catholic Church moved me to it.'" *Contr. Epist. Fundam.* 6.

‡ *Contr. Faust. Man.* xxvi. c. 7. § *Ib.* xxix. 2.

Of the former case an instance may be found in the fact that S. Augustine, when discussing the question, How, if perfect justice was possible for a mortal, no mortal had ever attained it, meets the question, and that not once only, but several times on other grounds, but does not adduce the Virgin as an instance of an actually existing example of perfection. Again and again does he speak of Christ as the only perfect specimen of humanity.* On the contrary when S. Paulinus writes to him [what might seem to suggest a contrary sense],† he does not meet with any reproof. . . .

"Of the latter, an instance may be found in the fact, that when it is specially S. Austin's interest to produce a sample of a good fruit coming from an evil stock, he never instances Christ coming from Mary. Let us consider this a little more at length. Julian endeavoured to show that Manicheism would follow from Augustine's doctrine of original sin.

"If one human being springs from another, he argued, and a good tree cannot bring forth bad fruit, then either man whom God created is bad: or the bad fruit, man in sin, does not come from the good tree which God created. Therefore either Pelagianism is true, or Manicheism is not false. Now if Augustine could have said in reply to this, 'All allow Christ to be good, and all allow Mary to have been conceived and born in sin,' then the Catholic world must have admitted that he had produced a flagrant instance against his adversary. Besides Augustine was perfectly familiar with the texts *In Adam all die*, *All have sinned*, and the like. Why does he not fling them with a graceless recklessness in the Virgin's face, when occasion offered? These are facts which his belief in the Immaculate Conception would, if it could be made out, perfectly explain.

"S. Augustine seems to have been unwilling to enter into the question of Mary's immunity, from the bad use which he saw the Pelagians would make of it—not as Catholics would, as an exception which proves the rule of original sin, but as an item in an induction to disprove that rule. . . . Let us see if there is any more definite ground for thinking that the Saint held it himself. Now S. Austin held, as most writers on the subject show, that if our Lord had *had* sin when He was born, He would have *done* sin when He grew up.

* *De Pecc. et Mer.* ii. 7, *De perf. Justit.*, *De Spir. et Lit.* 62, *De Nat. et Grat.* 49, *Ep.* 157, 4, 177, 16.

† See the passage *supra*, *The Purification*, etc., p. 158.

"'It is to be observed,' he says, 'that the Apostle thought, that in order to show that there was no sin *in* Christ, it was enough to say, that He *did* no sin.* For certainly He would have done sin, even when He had grown up, if He had it when a babe. For the reason why there is no man, except Him, who did no sin as He grew older, is, because He was the only one of men who had no sin in the beginning of His infancy.'†

"This should make no more difficulty in the way of believing Mary's Immaculate Conception than the text, *Who only hath immortality*, does in the way of believing the immortality of angels and spirits.

"This accords with what he so often urges against the Pelagians, that when Our Lord told us daily to pray that our sins may be forgiven, it was because we daily do *real* sins that require forgiveness. If then S. Augustine exempts Mary from all actual sin, it follows from his teaching most directly, that she was exempt from all original sin. . . . The following passage does exempt her distinctly from actual sin, and by inference, if not by direct assertion, from original sin. It shall be given at some length, that its drift may be better understood:—

"'He (Pelagius) seems acutely enough to put the question, In what state are we to think the Saints of the Old Testament departed this life, with sin or without it? So that if the reply be, With sin; their damnation may be supposed to have followed, which is impious to believe. But if it be said, they left this life without sin, he may prove that man, at all events when death is near, has existed without sin in this life. And in this, mighty acute as he is, he does not notice that even the just do not say without reason in [the Lord's] prayer, *Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors:* and that the Lord Christ when He explained the said prayer, by His doctrine added most truthfully, *For, if you forgive men their sins, your heavenly Father will forgive you your sins.* For by this spiritual incense, so to call it, which is brought before God on that altar of the heart which we are admonished to hold up to Him, even if we do not live here without sin, die without sin we may; while from time to time that is by pardon blotted out, which from time to time by ignorance or infirmity is committed. Then he mentions those who are said not only not to have sinned, but to have lived justly, as Abel, Enoch, etc., etc., Joseph, to whom the Virgin was espoused, John. He adds also women, Debbora, Anna Samuel's mother, Judith, Esther, another Anna daughter of Phanuel, and the Mother also of our Lord and Saviour, whom, to use his words, it is necessary to orthodoxy to believe to be without sin.

"'Now with the exception of the holy Virgin Mary, touching whom, out of respect to our Lord, when we are on the subject of *sins*, I have no mind to entertain the question—for how are we to know what greater degree of grace was conferred, in order to vanquish *sin* in every respect, upon her who merited to conceive and bring forth Him, whom all allow to have had no sin?—with the exception of this Virgin then, if it was in our power to bring together

* 1 *Pet.* ii. 22.

† *Contr. Jul. Pel.* v. 57.

into one place all the saints, men and women, when they lived here, and ask them whether they were without sin, what are we to suppose they would have answered; that which this man says, or that which John the Apostle said? I ask you, how great so ever the excellence of holiness may have been which they had in this body, if they could be asked this, whether would they not have exclaimed with one voice, *If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us?*' *

"That Virgin therefore might, without deceiving herself, say, I have no sin: yet S. Austin said, as we have seen already, that the Apostle thought that in order to show that there was no sin in Christ, it was enough to say that He *did* no sin. If then Austin had wished to show that there was no sin in Mary, it was enough to show, with a view of showing this, that she did no sin. He adds:—

"'Christ would certainly have done sin, when He had grown up, if He had it when a babe.'

"This is tantamount to making the two necessarily connected. . . . For as there is no . . . cause from which actual sin comes except original . . . the proposition is like the following in form: All roses, which do not wither, had no canker in the bud. Mary, the Mystical Rose, did not wither, therefore neither had she the canker of original sin. This seems undeniably to follow from S. Austin's principles.

"It is however to be observed that some manuscripts, and S. Thomas too, have a different reading of the passage. Instead of the words: 'How are we to know what greater degree of grace,' etc., they have, 'For the ground on which we know that a greater grace was conferred is, because she merited to conceive,' etc. But the reading of the Benedictine from three MSS. against two and S. Thomas, has been here followed in default of better and fuller information. With the latter reading S. Austin *seems* to assert, as the reason why he wished to avoid the question, that there were not data enough to settle it upon. Supposing S. Thomas to be acquainted with both readings, it is possible he might have thought that either reading left his oracle ambiguous. We need therefore a more positive statement, and one which will tend to show whether or no S. Augustine really meant to express a doubt about the matter; and such passage is the one which in S. Thomas's days was lost to the Church.

"But let us consider whether the whole gist of the argument in this passage does not clearly tell in favour of exempting Mary

* *De Nat. et Grat.* c. Pelag. 41.

from all sins actual *and* original. What Pelagius contends for is this. 'that it was not nature which was to be blamed, but men for their carelessness:' that nature, even as it now is, was equal to the fulfilment of the law: that Adam's 'posterity are not only not weaker than he, but have even fulfilled several precepts, when he neglected to fulfil one.' In furtherance of this he contends, 'that to make man sinless, is not to make him equal to God; for angels, though sinless, are yet not equal to God: that this doctrine cannot lead to pride, unless falsehood and humility are compatible, and a man may call himself sinner when he is not: that the sins of the saints recorded in Scripture are put there not to show that *all* men, even the saints, are sinners and need grace, but that even those who have sinned, need not despair: that many are not only never said to have sinned, but styled positively just.'* It is clear then, that the very thing for which Pelagius is contending is, that the absence of actual sin in several persons mentioned in Holy Writ proves the non-existence of original. This being so, it is perfectly fair to use what S. Austin elsewhere says of Christ, of Mary also. S. Austin's exempting her from all actual sin, is really and truly tantamount to exempting her from original sin; otherwise his whole argument against Pelagius is good for nothing. . . .

"But the passage in which S. Austin appears most clearly to have enunciated his belief upon this subject, is the one in the *Opus Imperfectum*. Julian endeavours to make out there, that Augustine's doctrine of original sin was essentially Manichean, and Augustine in reply shows, that S. Ambrose at that rate would be Manichean in his doctrine too, and that Jovinian had actually called him so. This Julian denies, but takes occasion to compare Augustine unfavourably with this latter heretic.

"'He (Jovinian) said, that men by the sacraments (says Julian) were made incapable of doing wrong, but you (Augustine), that they are not even freed by grace. He makes Mary's virginity come to an end, owing to the law of parturition; you transfer Mary herself to the devil's book, owing to the law of birth.'†

"Now by these words it is plain that Julian wishes to make it appear, that S. Austin's doctrine of original sin goes against a received opinion about Mary. To transcribe, is to remove from

* See Garn. ad Mercat. 1, p. 373 *sq.*, who gives Pelagius's words consecutively.

† *Op. Imp.* iv. 122. Ille virginitatem Mariæ partus conditione dissolvit, tu ipsam Mariam diabolo nascendi conditione *transcribis*.

one book to another. Mary then, according to the received opinion, was in some special way in God's book. As Jovinian violated the received opinion about her perfect integrity after childbirth, so much more did Augustine (in Julian's view) violate the received opinion about the state she was in at her birth. Either thus much must be true, or Julian's contrast is good for nothing. It is clear that his aim is to render Augustine's doctrine odious, by representing it as a worse violation of the ordinary belief of Catholics than Jovinian's: not as a violation of Bible truth, as it is called; for there is no text, except allegorical ones, that tells us on either subject, but as a violation of the belief of Catholics.

"Now the words *conditio nascendi*, which I have rendered 'the law of her birth,' are by no means adequately rendered by those words: they imply rather the whole set of circumstances attendant upon birth. And, moreover, the word 'birth' is particularly likely to mislead: it was only so rendered in order to put the passage at its minimum of meaning first, and not at all because it expresses all that is meant by *nascor* in ecclesiastical Latin. The word more nearly answers to our 'coming into being,' or the γίγνομαι of the Greeks: it includes conception as well as birth; and it is obvious enough, that what Julian wants for his purpose is to make out, that S. Augustine's theory of the law by which all human beings except Christ come into being, would make Mary the subject of original sin as well as other people. Now let us observe S. Austin's answer to this, brief as it is, and we shall see that there is in it the same reference as before to the Lord's Prayer, and the same reference to Christ as the originating cause of all grace:—

"'I do not say (he replies) that men are not set free even by grace: and God forbid Ambrose should say so: but we do say something you will not like, that it is only by grace that they are freed, not merely so freed as to have debts forgiven them, but also so freed as not to be led into temptation. We *do not transfer* Mary into the devil's book, owing to the law of birth; but the reason why we do not is, because this law itself is broken by the grace of being born again.'*

"The plain meaning of these words appears to me to be this: Mary, like the rest of Adam's descendants, would have been conceived and born in sin except for grace,—she would have been, as we are, under the devil, considering the way she came into being,

* *Op. Imp.* iv. 122.

had it not been for the interference of grace to prevent her ever being under the devil.* What S. Austin is fighting for is, that human nature apart from Christ, as the originating cause of all grace, is sold under sin. If by not transcribing Mary to the devil (to render the words very literally), he merely meant that she was not *born* in sin, and did not mean she was not *conceived* in sin, then he would mean that birth is the beginning of sinfulness, and not conception, which is against the explicit teaching of the Psalmist he so often quoted, out of all harmony with his hesitation about allowing the Baptist's sanctification in the womb,† and altogether inadequate as an answer to what Julian is throwing in his teeth. For in the very next words to those which were just cited, Julian says :—

"'Jovinian puts the better condition on a par with the good, that is, virginity with marriage; you call the intercourse of marriage itself diseased.'

"On the whole, then, it seems pretty clear, that had S. Thomas heard the great oracle upon questions of grace speaking thus, he would have spoken himself with a plainness, which it would have been hard for the most impudent corrupters of manuscripts to have made ambiguous. And we see that it is possible enough that Augustine had before him a maximum of meaning, when he spoke of God honouring both sexes.

"One more remark may be made upon this interesting passage: it is this, that S. Austin from the singular, 'I do not say,' passes to the plural, '*We* do not say,' '*We* do not transcribe.' Is there then any passage in the writings of the great archbishop of Milan, who received S. Austin into the Church, which will give a reason for this change of persons, or is it merely accidental? The reader shall judge for himself, whether it is possible that the doctor of grace should have had the following passage in his mind :—

"'Come then,' says S. Ambrose, 'and seek Thy sheep, not by servants, not by mercenaries, but by Thyself. Receive me in that flesh, which in Adam fell. Receive me not from Sara, but from Mary; that she may be a Virgin incorrupt, but a Virgin by grace, entirely free from *every* stain of sin.'" ‡

* "Not that I deny"—S. Augustine would mean to say—"Mary's liability to that stain of original sin, which is common to the whole human race. For she was descended from Adam, and was therefore included in the natural condition. But that condition was in her case arrested by a special grace, so that she never was in any single moment of her life a child of wrath, a victim of the devil's first triumph." Harper, *Peace through the Truth*, 1st Series, p. 372.

† Serm. 293, *In Nat. Joan. Bapt.* vii. 11, 12.

‡ *In Ps.* cxviii. Serm. 22, § 30. Per gratiam, ab omni integra labe peccati. Compare this with what the author of *De Symb. ad Catech.* iv. (int. Opp. August.

We now give some passages from S. Augustine and S. Fulgentius which bear upon and at the same time serve to explain the distinction they make between the flesh of Mary and that of her Divine Son, the former, *viz.*, as flesh of sin, and the latter, flesh in the likeness of flesh of sin. For further elucidation we add some explanatory notes, borrowed from Father Harper.

S. AUGUSTINE.

"If we are asked how it was that Christ was not tithed—since evidently He too was in the loins of Abraham, according to the flesh, when that patriarch paid tithes to Melchisedech—we can only answer, that though Mary His own Mother of whom He took flesh was born of the carnal concupiscence of her parents; yet not so did she conceive Christ, since she generated Him not from seed of man, but from the Holy Ghost. . . .

"Concupiscence, then, is either itself a fault (vitium), if it did not exist before sin; or it has been rendered faulty (vitiata) by sin; and consequently from it is derived original sin. There was, then, in Mary's body fleshly matter, whence Christ took flesh. But Christ was not in her the fruit of concupiscence. Hence He was born of flesh, with flesh in the likeness of flesh of sin, and not as others with flesh of sin. Consequently, so far from contracting original sin by generation, He has done away with it in others by regeneration. Thus the one is the first Adam, the other the second; because the one was made, the other born, without concupiscence of the flesh. But the one was only man, the other both God and man: and so the one was capable of not sinning, whilst the other was incapable of sinning." *

"Therefore He only, who was made man, yet continued to be God, has had no sin, nor assumed flesh of sin; although it was from the Mother's flesh of sin.† For the flesh, which He thence received, He of a truth purified, either in order to receive it, or by His receiving it.‡ He had for Mother a

vol. vi. p. 424e) says, when speaking of the contest of the Woman with the serpent, *Apoc.* xii. "Mulierem illam Virginem Mariam significasse, quæ Caput nostrum integra integrum peperit, quæ etiam ipsa figuram in se sanctæ Ecclesiæ demonstravit." *Jesus the Son of Mary*, etc., vol. ii. p. 275 *sq.*

* *Op. Imperfect. Contr. Julian.* L. vi. 22. See also L. v. 15, 1; *Genes. ad litt.* L. x. 18, et 20.

† "Mary's was flesh of sin, because it came in the order of nature from a sinful stock; and therefore, had not God's grace arranged it otherwise, would, by reason of its origin, have drawn along with it the subjection of the soul to original sin." Harper, *Peace through the Truth*, 1st Series, p. 371.

‡ Quod enim carnis inde suscepit, id profecto aut suscipiendum mundavit, aut suscipiendo mundavit. "It is evident that this cannot refer to Mary personally. For it would result from such an interpretation, that Our Lady was sinful either till the moment of the Incarnation, or at all events till within a short time of that mystery;—an opinion which shocks us in the mere imagination, and which has not a single authority to recommend it. S. Augustine, then, is referring to human nature in general, which the Divine Word first purified by the Immaculate Conception of Mary (ad suscipiendum mundavit); or, rather, since this was exceptional, and would have had no effect in itself on the rest of the human race, which He purified, by assuming

Virgin who conceived Him not by the law of flesh of sin, that is to say, not by movement of carnal concupiscence, but one who merited (promerentem) by her pious faith the holy germ to be formed in her. He had created her that He might choose her, and chose her that He might be made of her." *

"Why all these mighty arguments whereby thou reachest the height of impiety, saying that—since Jesus Christ was born of the Virgin Mary, whose flesh, as that of all others, was propagated from Adam—the flesh of Christ is no way different from the flesh of sin, and that we must believe the Apostle to have said without any distinction, that He was sent in the likeness of siuful flesh? † Nay, thou insistest, saying, that there is no flesh of sin, lest one should have to say that the flesh of Christ is a flesh of sin. What then means the likeness of flesh of sin, if there be no flesh of sin at all? And then thou sayest that I have not understood the Apostle's teaching; whilst still thou hast not explained to us, great doctor though thou be, how anything can be like what does not exist. But if it is simply folly to speak thus, and if, without any doubt, the flesh of Christ is not a flesh of sin, it remains that we admit that, the flesh of Christ excepted, all the rest of human flesh, is flesh of sin. And hence it appears that that concupiscence, wherein Christ would not be conceived, is the cause of the propagation of evil in the human race: for though Mary's body was the fruit of this concupiscence, yet she did not transmit it to that body, which she did not therewith conceive. For the rest, whoever denies that Christ is said to be in the likeness of flesh of sin, because all other flesh of men is flesh of sin, and whoever in such wise compares the flesh of Christ to the flesh of the rest of men, as to assert that both are of equal purity, he is to be regarded as a detestable heretic." ‡

"Mary [by reason of her descent] from Adam, died on account of sin; Adam died on account of sin; and the Flesh of the Lord from Mary died to take away sins." §

There are different readings of this passage. According to one, "of Adam" is supplied at the end of the first clause, thus: "on account of the sin of Adam." Another reading has: "Mary is from Adam: Adam died on account of sin," etc. A third, "Mary came from the first Adam, the Second Adam sprung from Mary for the sake of taking away sin."

Supposing the reading in the text to be the genuine one, what S. Augustine here says, seems at first sight to be opposed to his teaching in other places on the sinlessness of Mary. ‖ In reality,

it Himself (aut suscipiendo mundavit), as the Second Adam; and so virtually purifying it in its Head. Such is in substance the explanation of Vasquez." Harper, *Ib.* p. 372.—Moreover to interpret the words personally of Mary would put her in a lower rank than Jeremias and S. John Baptist, who though conceived in original sin, were not born in it, since they were sanctified in their mother's womb.

* *De Peccator. meritis et remissione*, L. ii. c. 24, in fin. See *Serm.* 69, c. 3.
† *Rom.* viii. 3. ‡ *Contr. Julian.* L. v. c. 15, n. 52.
§ *Enarratio in Ps.* xxxiv. Serm. 2, n. 3, P. L. Tom. 36, p. 355.
‖ *De natura et gratia*, c. 36.

however, there is no opposition. Mary, says the holy Doctor, as descended from Adam died on account of sin. What is more obviously true than this? Since had there been no sin, neither Mary, nor, for that matter, any other human being would have died at all—there would have been no death for man in the world. But we should well remark that the Saint does not say that Mary died on account of *her* sin; nor is this really implied in his words. Whereas, in what follows, "Adam died on account of sin," it is quite obvious that *his* sin is implied, for Adam's sin is notorious as an actual fact, and as being to him the cause of his death. Mary's death may be said to be *remotely* the effect of the sin of Adam, but not *proximately*, in the sense that Adam's sin, *qua* sin, in any way attached personally to her. Consequently the Saint's words here are in full accord with his statement elsewhere that Mary was altogether without sin.

This passage "only teaches (what is admitted by the majority of Catholic theologians) that Mary was really comprehended by nature in the sin of Adam, but was exempted by grace. . . . Death is the penalty of original sin. Therefore Adam died on account of sin; for he was subject to the stain. Mary also died, because she was by nature, as being descended from Adam, included in the penalty of Adam's sin. Not so with her Divine Son. He died of His own free will, in order to destroy sin." *

S. FULGENTIUS.

"This is the grace whereby it hath come to pass that God, who came to take away sins—for in Him is no sin—was conceived and born man in the likeness of flesh of sin, from flesh of sin. Since the flesh of Mary, which had been according to human use (humana solemnitate), conceived in iniquities, was assuredly (utique) flesh of sin, which brought forth the Son of God to the similitude of flesh of sin. For the Apostle testifies: *God sending His Son, in the likeness of sinful flesh and of sin, hath condemned sin in the flesh*,† Him, namely, *Who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but debased Himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men, and in habit found as a man*.‡ But for this cause was the Son of God sent in the likeness of sinful flesh and also in the likeness of men, both that He might be made like to men in the truth of the flesh which He had Himself created, and also that God, created in flesh without sin, might take away our unlikeness, which He saw was in our flesh not of His own work, but through our sin. The Son of God appeared, then, sent in the likeness of sinful flesh, because in His true human flesh there was not the iniquity of man, but his mortality. But in speaking of the likeness of sinful flesh in the Son of God, or rather of the Son of God in the likeness of sinful flesh, we must believe

* Harper, *Ib.* pp. 372, 3. † *Rom.* viii. 3. ‡ *Philip.* ii. 6, 7.

that the Only-begotten God did not take the filth of sin from the mortal flesh of the Virgin, but received the entire truth of nature. . . . Mary therefore conceived God the Word, and brought Him forth in sinful flesh which God received." *

"God the Only-begotten alone took away the sin of conception and birth, in that being conceived, He took true flesh from the Virgin, and in being born, preserved in His Mother the integrity of virginity. For this very cause God became the Son of the Virgin Mary, and the Virgin Mary was made Mother of the Only-begotten God: that Him whom the Father begat from eternity, the Virgin might conceive and bring forth in time: that same Virgin, I mean, whom God, who was to be born of her, in such wise prevented and filled with singular grace, that she might have as the fruit of her womb, Him whom the whole universe from the beginning has for its Lord; and see subject to her, by reason of His being born of her, Him whom in the unity of His Father's substance, not only human, but also angelic, creation acknowledges and adores as the Most High.

"In this way, then, were sin, and that penalty of sin which entered into the world through the guilt of a corrupted woman, taken away from the world by means of the childbirth of an inviolate Virgin. And because, in the condition of the human race brought about by a woman who was taken from a man alone, it was our lot to be held bound by the chain of death; the Divine goodness brought it to pass, by means of a Man who was born from a woman alone, life should be restored to man. In the one case by most wicked deception the devil allied to himself human nature in likeness of sin: in the other case God took human nature to the unity of His Person. In the one case the woman was deceived so as to become the daughter of the devil, in the other the Virgin was filled with grace that she might be made Mother of the Supreme and Unchangeable Only-begotten God. In the one case an angel, cast down through pride, gained possession of the soul of the woman whom he led astray; in the other God humbling Himself out of mercy, filled the womb of the Virgin, about to be born of her." †

SOME EXPLANATORY NOTES.

"Mary by virtue of her conception—if we consider it by itself, prescinding from the Divine predestination—was subject to the common law. By it she became obnoxious to original sin, because she was made really and truly a child of Adam; and *by nature* her will was included in the will of Adam, as the moral head of the human race. It required therefore, a positive act of God's will to exclude her from the category of our fallen condition. Otherwise she would have been comprehended in it. On the contrary, Jesus Christ, by virtue of His miraculous conception was *ipso facto* free from the taint of original

* *Ep.* 17, Patr. Lat. Tom. 65, p. 458.
† *De Fide*, nn. 17, 18, *Ib.*, p. 680.

sin. . . . Suarez, who was one of the most zealous and affectionate champions of the Immaculate Conception, declares it to be his matured conviction, that *Mary sinned in Adam;* that is, that she was *by nature* included in the common disaster, and was only rescued by grace.* . . . Scotus entirely coincides with Suarez in the maintenance of the same doctrine. . . . [So also Bossuet, Plazza, and Fr. Perrone. . . .]

"Such universal propositions of the Inspired Scriptures as the following, *All have sinned, and do need the glory of God.—Therefore, as by the offence of one man, unto all men to condemnation.—And so death passed unto all men, in that all have sinned.—Judging this, that if one died for all, then all were dead*†—which are interpreted by the Fathers generally, and by S. Augustine in particular,‡ as including all men whatsoever except Jesus Christ only, can now be legitimately understood as comprehending in their extension Our Blessed Lady likewise, without interfering in any way with the revealed truth of her Immaculate Conception.

"Again: those expressions common to the Fathers, that her flesh '*was flesh of sin*'—'flesh conceived in sin according to the usual law of human nature'§—'born and procreated of flesh of sin, and herself flesh of sin'—'flesh under the obligation of sin'‖—receive their natural interpretation, and are verified in her, without throwing the most distant shadow on the pure and unclouded light of her first rising. . . .

"Mary then incurred the general obligation; but was individually exempted. Her Divine Son was not included in the primal sin, and consequently did not contract the obligation. He was *by nature* absolutely free from all stain of original sin. . . .

"The Blessed Mother merited not this pre-eminent dignity:—she had no claim to it. All the gifts which she received at her Conception, were of pure grace, undeserved. . . . But Jesus, even in His human nature, is still Son of God. For in Christ there is but one Person; and that Person is the Word, co-equal with the Father. Hence, as that human nature was never terminated by any other Personality, it could claim immaculate purity as its right, so to speak. . . . Moreover, the humanity of Christ did not descend by physical law from the loins of Adam, and consequently, . . . it would in the actual order of God's Providence, and, as it were, by just right, have been clothed from the first in sanctifying grace; even abstracting for the moment from the paramount claims which flow from the Hypostatic Union."

Hence: "The Papal definition declares that Mary, in the first moment of her Conception was preserved from original sin *by a peculiar grace and privilege of Almighty God, in regard of the merits of Jesus Christ, the Saviour of the human race.*

* *De Mysteriis Vitæ Christi.* Disp. iii. § 2, n. 3, 5, *De Vitiis et Peccatis,* Disp. ix. § 4, n. 12, et sq.

† *Rom.* iii. 23, v. 18, 12, 2 *Cor.* v. 14.

‡ *De peccator. merit.* L. ii. c.c. 20, 29, 35, *Contr. Julian.* vi. 7, *De Nat. et Grat.* c. 4, *De perfect. Justit.* c. 21, et Ambros. citatum ab August. *Contr. Julian.* ii. 2.

§ S. August., *De Peccator. merit.* ii. c. 24, S. Fulgentius, *De Incarnat. et Grat., Epist.* xvii. c. 6.

‖ S. Paschas. Radbert., in *Opusc. de Partu Virginali;* Hugo Victorin. in *Summa Sentt.* i. 16.

"Our Blessed Lady, therefore, was most truly redeemed, *after a sublime manner*, by the merits of her Divine Son. He died for her. He shed His precious Blood for her; for *He gave Himself a redemption for all*. And again, *Christ died for all*.* And she was included with the rest. . . . Hence, this wonderful privilege was a pure and simple grace.†

"Jesus, by virtue of the infinite dignity of His Person, and of the miraculous formation of His human nature, was absolutely exempted from pains, anxieties, sorrow [sickness], and death. The sentence pronounced on Adam came not near Him. He could not be included in the universal law. His human nature would have certainly participated in the Life and Immortality, to which it was united, if He had not condescended to take upon Himself our infirmities, and to assume our mortality, *that through death He might destroy him who had the empire of death, that is to say, the devil: and might deliver them, who through the fear of death were all their life-time subject to servitude*.‡

"But Mary, on the contrary, was subject to the common law by virtue of her natural generation from Adam.§ She could only, therefore, have been delivered from the liability to sorrow, suffering [sickness], and final dissolution, by a positive decree of the Divine Will, like to that which exempted her from the stain of original sin. As God did not make this exemption, she paid the debt which she had contracted by her descent from our common progenitor."‖

APPENDIX.

"There is a very remarkable document attributed by its first editor, the Jesuit Turrianus, to S. Dionysius of Alexandria.¶ Subsequent criticism has proved that it is a forgery of the fourth century. . . . The document belongs to the Apollinarian school, and turns principally upon the reasons of the sinlessness of Jesus. . . . Apollinaris denied to our Lord as man a human intellectual soul, on the ground that every human intellect had freedom of choice, and all human freedom was liable to sin. Human freedom is, according to his theory, the slave of the flesh necessarily; but the writer indignantly repels the notion that our Lord is a δοῦλος; He has only the outward form of a slave. Hence He has no human intellect, the place of which is occupied by the Logos. Such is his account of Jesus. Now, on this exemption from slavery it would seem that Mary could have no claim. By all the laws of logic she ought to be a slave, since she at least has human intellect and human freedom. To our utter astonishment, Mary suddenly appears on the scene, and she too is denied to be a slave. 'He made not His dwelling in a slave, but in His holy Tabernacle not made with hands, which is Mary the Mother of God. Then in her our King, the King of Glory, became a High Priest, and remains for ever, having once entered into the

* 1 *Tim.* ii. 6; 2 *Cor.* v. 15.

† Harper, *Peace through the Truth*, 1st Ser., pp. 327-31.

‡ *Heb.* ii. 14, 15.

§ Suarez, *De Myst. Vit. Christ.* Disp. iii. § 2, n. 2; S. Augustine, *Contr. 2 Epp. Pelagian.* L. iv. c. 4.

‖ Harper, *Ib.* p. 334.

¶ Epistola adv. Paul. Samosat. Vide Opera S. Dionysii. Romæ 1796, p. 203.

Holy of Holies' (p. 261). Elsewhere the writer calls her 'a virginal Paradise,' and says that 'the Divine Word, since He alone knew the mode of this conception and birth, kept His Mother incorrupt, blessed from hand to foot.' Now we ask what this absolutely exceptional case of a human intellect, contrary to all rules, endowed with a sinlessness parallel to our Lord's, can be but an Immaculate Conception? (p. 278).

"He does not, of course, mean that her innocence was so identical with our Lord's that in her also it was a physical inability to sin. But he did mean that the analogy was so close that she was in a category with Him, apart from all, and that she could no more be called a slave than He. As if to make it clearer, there is the allusion to the Immaculate Eve before original sin, contained in the words 'Virginal Paradise.' This would be in itself sufficient to show that in the mind of the author, Mary's sinlessness was like that of unfallen man in Paradise; in other words, that she was free from original sin. But there is further proof that, in his view, the sanctification of Mary dates not from the conception of Jesus, but from her own. This point is still more certain from a deeper insight into the Apollinarian view. According to Apollinaris, the Word had been man from all eternity. Man, in the state of pure or fallen nature, was the imperfect man. The Eternal Word, on the contrary, was the only perfect man, being the supernatural πνεῦμα or Logos which was wanted to man's perfection. His was the only real archetypal humanity; and as Apollinaris held as a first principle the utter unchangeableness of God, an immutability which forbade even a change of outward relations, he held also that in some real sense the Word was Man from all eternity. Thus the Incarnation, the taking of flesh at a given period of time, would be but a stage in His manhood. He had already possessed real human reason from all eternity. This was without doubt what Apollinaris meant by his view that the Word was eternally man. There was in his mind a strange confusion, or rather an absolute identity of the real and ideal order. What concerns us, however, is the effect of this system on his view of Mary. S. Gregory Nyssen * draws from it the conclusion that he ought to have held her also to be eternally the Mother of God, and to have existed from eternity. It would have been more obvious to conclude that Apollinaris must have held that she was not His Mother at all, but only the Mother of His flesh. The Saint, however, knew his system too well to attribute this to him. Apollinaris was too much influenced by Alexandrian theology not to be a staunch asserter of the term Mother of God. In his mind the Eternal Word was so connected with His Mother, that if He was eternally the ideal, and the real Man, she was eternally His ideal Mother, and the real relation between the two would thus commence from the first moment of her existence. Then would begin for her that connection between her human soul and the Logos which was precisely the supernatural state needed for the perfection of a human being. And in this sense it was that she was not a δοῦλος, and that she was a tabernacle not made with hands; that is, she was supernatural in her very making at the first instant of her creation.

"Does it follow from this that the Immaculate Conception dates from Apollinaris? Nothing can be more unphilosophical and unhistorical. Illogically, in the teeth of their own principles, the Apollinarian school is forced by the tradition of the Church, to assign to Mary a quite exceptional place, shared

* Gallandius, Tom. vi. 527.

by no one but her Son. There was a radiant circle in the mind of the early Church, drawn round the God-Man and His Mother, into which no other being enters. Her sinlessness is paralleled with that of our Lord, and made different from the holiness of every creature but herself. This was the mode in which the Immaculate Conception was expressed by the early Fathers. It was the real living idea out of which sprung the subsequent judgment of the Church. Of course they did not say that she was free from original sin. They did not use the term original sin at all; but they classed her sinlessness in a category apart with that of Jesus. Their very silence shows it. When did they ever say that she was sinless like S. John the Baptist, who was sanctified in his mother's womb? It was the tradition of the Church of Rome, ever ahead of that of all other Churches. We have seen it in Hippolytus, who uses words remarkably like those of the unknown Apollinarian writer. In both there is the reference to the same chapter of the Hebrews, though Mary is in one compared to the Ark, in the other to the Tabernacle. In both there is the same connection between the state of Jesus and the state of Mary in regard to sin. In the one case, she is incorrupt like Jesus; in the other slavery is denied of her as of Jesus. But the clearest passage is that from the newly discovered Nisibene hymns of S. Ephrem. . . .*

"As for the strange doctrine of the eternity of Mary, it is an evident perversion of the tradition of the Church, which we find in S. Irenæus, that the idea of Mary was already energising in God's mind before the Fall, since for the sake of the thought of the unborn Mary, He forgave Eve.† Mary had thus already, in the idea of God, the innocence of the unfallen Eve, whom she was to replace. . . ."

"There is here a phenomenon to be accounted for. In those melancholy bodies of fallen Churches all over Asia and Africa we find the same strange devotion to Mary. . . . They could not have borrowed it from each other, for they detested each other more than the Church. Apollinarians of old, Phantasiasts of Armenia, philosophical Monophysites of Alexandria, wild Abyssinians, all have the same devotion to Mary. What is most strange of all, we find a Nestorian writer advocating the Immaculate Conception (Carmina Nisibena, p. 30). S. Ephrem's tradition is lingering even there. The Roman doctrine is to be found even in the Greek Church; and that the Jacobites did not borrow it from Constantinople, the hatred between Melchites and Copts is a sufficient guarantee. Let us remember also that in the case of heretics this devotion to Mary is in logical opposition to their tenets. Eutyches started with denying that Jesus was of one substance with Mary, as Nestorius with refusing her the title of Mother of God. The devotion to Mary was too strong for them. They could not have been popular without it. Their idea of her is the Catholic view. Consistently with their strange theology, the Abyssinians ought to hold that Our Lord was subject to sin: they are withheld from drawing the inference by the fear of staining Mary's sinlessness.‡ To this day the Abyssinians believe Mary to have existed in Paradise, and that Our Lord made a compact there with her about the salvation of the world.§ Thus in that curious barbarian region, we see Catholic tradition, down to minutest points, though sadly corrupted. It is

* See *supra*, p. 232.

† See *supra*, pp. 36-38.

‡ Dormer, vol. ii. p. 191.

§ *Highlands of Ethiopia*, ii. 369.

strange to find in Abyssinia traces of the views of S. Irenæus on Mary 'the advocate of Eve.' The germ has fallen on a poisonous soil and has developed badly; but the germ is that which the Apostles sowed, and which the Catholic Church has kept." *

During the celebration of Mass in past times, it was usual on the greater festivals to sing what was called a Trope—a little hymn or versicle—before the Introit.† One of these Tropes is given us by Fr. Ballerini,‡ who ascribes its composition to S. Ambrose. Indeed the name of this Saint is prefixed to it in the ancient codex, from which it has been taken. Anyhow, the latest date which has been assigned to it is the latter part of the eighth century. The following is the hymn together with the translation:—

Candidissima uti lilia,	Hail, O whitest of lilies,
Salve, Æterni Patris Lilia,	Lily of the Eternal Father,
Salve, Mater Redemptoris,	Hail, Mother of the Redeemer,
Salve, Sponsa Spiratoris,	Hail, Spouse of the Spirit,
Sine macula concepta,	Conceived without stain,
Salve, Triadis electa,	Hail, elect of the Trinity,
Salve, inferni Victrix aspidis,	Hail, Conqueror of the infernal viper,
Illius expers sola cuspidis,	Alone free from his sting,
Salve, Triadis electa,	Hail, elect of the Trinity,
Sine macula concepta.	Conceived without stain.§

* *Dublin Review*, April, 1868, pp. 356-60.

† See Durand., *De Div. Offic.* l. iv. c. 5, n. 6, and Du Cange, *Glossar.*

‡ Ballerini, S. J., *Sylloge Monumentorum*, P. 1, p. 23 *et sq.*

§ Fr. Harper, 1st Series, p. 357.

CHAPTER V.

THE SANCTITY OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN (*Continued*). MARY'S ACQUIRED SANCTITY, PRACTICE OF VIRTUES, HOLY VIRGINITY.

The patristic view of Our Blessed Lady is that she practised every virtue in its highest perfection, and became the model of the Christian life for all to imitate. She is represented as co-operating faithfully with divine grace, taking the greatest pains to acquire virtue and advance in holiness, shunning with utmost care whatever might in anything retard her progress, or render her less pleasing to God.

Whilst those incidents narrated in the Gospels that bear upon Mary's character and conduct, form, so to speak, the great store-house whence the Fathers are wont to gather forth the assemblage of her virtues, still it would seem that the beautiful portrait they give of her, is drawn less from any record of particular facts, than from that uniform conception of God's holy Mother, as an ideal of all perfection, which has ever been traditional in the Church, and is so deeply impressed in the minds and hearts of the faithful. This has led the Fathers to lay to her credit the most excellent practice of every virtue—even though there be no distinct record thereof to show—and to predicate of her in super-eminent degree, whatever is held to be most glorious and praiseworthy in the lives of all other saints.

S. Ambrose describes with so great fulness of detail Our Lady's virtues, especially in his treatise on Holy Virginity, that on this head he is amongst all the Fathers of the first six centuries their chief exponent and mouthpiece; and in this regard may well be styled the Marian Doctor. Other Fathers of the same period have left treatises in praise of Virginity, and of those who profess that state as forming the fairest and most excellent portion of the Church of Christ; but none we think has written so well on this matter as S. Ambrose. He extols

the virtue and profession of virginity with enthusiasm, with an eloquence sweet and simple, fertile in beautiful thoughts and graceful images, but never turgid or hyperbolical. He is always profound, solid, and eminently practical, yet at the same time full of tender piety and devotion. If he thus excels, it is because more than with other Fathers who have written on the same topic, Mary is ever the inspiration of his theme. Their treatises on Virginity are for the most part rather of a somewhat philosophical, or mystical, or merely hortatory character, with only here and there a passing reference to Our Lady; or with even none at all, as is the case with that of S. Chrysostom. But with S. Ambrose, when he is addressing virgins consecrated to God, Mary is the beginning, the middle, and end of his discourse. The Virgin of virgins is with him the form of the virtue that they profess, the mirror wherein they may see clearly reflected the life they should lead, the perfect model they should strive to imitate in all their thoughts, words, and actions.

Several of the Fathers, and S. Ambrose in particular, speak of the profession of Virginity as an institution belonging peculiarly to Our Blessed Lady, and deriving its origin from her. They affirm, moreover, that as Jesus Christ is the Head and Divine Spouse of virgins, so Mary is their Queen and Mother.

It is not out of place here to observe that Mary, because she was to be the exemplar for all Christians, is set forth as the ideal or consecrated type of the triple state of Virginity, Matrimony, and Widowhood; and that passages may be found in the Fathers which bear upon her in each of these relations.

It would be superfluous to speak particularly here of the virtues ascribed by the Fathers to the Blessed Virgin; since they are mentioned with full detail in the quotations we make from their works.

S. AMBROSE.

"To have a true portraiture of virginity, you should take the life of Mary, wherein is brightly reflected as in a mirror, the very expression of chastity and the form of virtue. Thence you may gather examples of how to live, for there as in a model are drawn the rules of right conduct showing what you should correct, imitate, and preserve.

"A principal incentive to the learner is the nobility of the teacher. Now what is there more noble than God's own Mother? What more splendid than she of whom the Splendour Itself made choice? What more chaste than she who engendered a body without carnal contact? And what shall I say regarding her other virtues? She was virgin not only in body, but also in

spirit, since she never adulterated her pure and simple-minded affections by any solicitings of guile:—humble of heart,* grave in words, prudent of soul, sparing of speech, studious in reading; placing her hope not in the uncertainty of riches, but in the prayer of the poor; attentive to work, modest in discourse; used to seek not man but God for the arbiter of her soul, to wish well to all, to rise in presence of her elders, not to envy her equals, to shun boasting, to follow right reason, to love virtue. When did she ever even by look offend her parents? When did she quarrel with her neighbours? When did she ever show distaste for one of mean condition? When did she deride one who was weak? When did she turn away from one who was poor—accustomed as she was to hold such intercourse with others as did honour to her compassion, and was not unbefitting her modesty? There was nothing strange in her looks, nothing but what was modest in her actions, nothing too languid in her carriage, nothing uncomposed in her gait, nothing of pertness in her voice; so that the very outward appearance of her body was the image of her mind, and an expression of rectitude. For just as a good house should be recognised as such at its very threshold, and give evidence on the first approach to it that nought of darkness lurks within; so in like manner our soul—without let or hindrance from the barriers of the body—should, as a bright lamp that is placed within, let its light shine forth outside.

"Why should I go on to speak of her spare diet, or of the multitude of duties she charged herself with,—that the latter were beyond her nature, and the former scarce sufficed for nature, the one allowing no repose, the other making one continued fast? And when at intervals there was the will to take refreshment, the food was of the commonest sort, such as might ward off death, but give no relish. For sleep she had no desire before it became a necessity; and then whilst the body rested, the spirit was watching; and often amidst her slumbers would she revert to what she had been reading, or take up again the thread of what sleep had interrupted, or occupy herself with arrangements already made, or anticipate things yet to be done.

"She went not abroad from home unless to the Church, and then only with her parents or relations. In the retirement of home she would be always occupied, and when abroad was accompanied by others—yet with no better guard than her own self, since so venerable was she in her whole gait and deportment, that in taking her steps, it was not so much the sole of her foot that she raised, as herself to a new degree of virtue.† Thus it was that whilst the Virgin had others for guardians of the bodily exterior, she had herself for guardian of her moral conduct. Many there were indeed, from whom she might learn, if any lesson there was for her to learn, who had her own virtues for instructresses; since everything that she did was a teaching. In such wise then would Mary pay attention to all, as though she were herself to be admonished by others, whilst she was at the very time fulfilling all requirements of virtue, and not so much learning as teaching.

"Such then, did the Evangelist portray her, such the Angel find her, such the Holy Ghost choose her. Why after this should I dwell on further details, how her parents loved, how strangers extolled, her who was worthy that of her should be born the Son of God? She is found on the Angel's entrance

* See S. Ambrose, *in Luc.* i. 36, *supra*, p. 131.

† See *supra*, p. 125, "For since the holy Virgin," etc.

at home in retirement,* without companions, that there might be none to interrupt her recollection, or break the silence; since she, forsooth, desired no women for companions, she who had her own good thoughts for company. In truth at no time did she seem to herself to be less alone than when she was alone. And yet how should she be alone, who had by her so many books, so many archangels, so many prophets?

"Gabriel found her, in fact, where he was used to visit her: and Mary, at the Angel's appearance—as though in form of a man—was agitated with fear, though on hearing her own name she recognised him as not unknown to her. Thus she acted the part of a stranger when it was case of a man, she who was no stranger when it was that of an Angel, that thou mayest know what it is to have religious ears, and modest eyes. Hence it was that, on hearing herself saluted, she held her peace, but, when accosted by name, made answer—and, whereas at the first she was troubled in spirit, afterwards promised compliance.

"How religiously considerate Mary was to her relations, Holy Scripture testifies. She grew, indeed, still more humble when she knew of her special election by God, and at once set out for the mountains to visit her cousin: not, forsooth, in order to believe the actual occurrence of what had been told her, since she had already believed the divine oracle: for *Blessed*, says Elisabeth, *art thou who hast believed*. Moreover, during the long space of three months that Mary remained, she was not seeking for faith, but showing forth charity. And *this* after the infant, leaping in his parent's womb, saluted the Lord's Mother—already possessed of devotion, before coming to the use of his natural faculties (prius compos devotionis quam naturæ).

"Then at the occurrence of so many subsequent wonders—when the barren brings forth, a Virgin conceives, the dumb speaks, the wise man adores, Simeon is expectant, the stars are announcing—Mary, who could be moved at the entrance [of the Angel], is unmoved at sight of so much marvel: but *kept*, it is said, *all these things in her heart*. And albeit the Mother of the Lord, yet was she desirous to learn the precepts of the Lord; and she who had given birth to God, yet wished to know God.

"And what about her going every year to Jerusalem at the solemn feast of the Pasch, and her going with Joseph? In a virgin, modesty is everywhere the companion of the other virtues. It should be inseparable from virginity: without it, indeed, virginity cannot exist. And hence Mary did not go even to the temple without a guardian of her modesty.

"Here then is a picture of virginity. For such was Mary, that her life alone is of itself the instruction of all. Now if the doer fail not to please us, let us in such wise approve of her work, that every virgin, who aspires to its reward, seek to imitate the example. And how many different kinds of virtues shine forth in this one Virgin—the secretness of modesty, the standard of faith, the service of devotion; a virgin within the house, a helpful companion, a Mother at the Temple."

"O how many virgins will she not come to meet; how many will she not, in her embrace, bring to the Lord, saying, 'Here is one that has kept with unstained purity the bridal bed, the nuptial chamber of my Son.' And even

* "It is within the house that Mary is blessed by the Angel." *De Virginitate*, cap. viii. n. 42. See also *supra*, p. 130, and S. Jerome, p. 132.

as the Lord will Himself commend such to His Father, so too Mary, repeating His own words will say: 'Holy Father, these are they whom I have kept for Thee, amongst whom the Son of Man, reclining His head, reposed. I ask that where I am, they also may be with me. And if they are not to profit themselves alone—since they lived not for themselves alone—may this one redeem her parents, that one her brethren. Just Father, the world hath not known me, but these have known me, and the world they would not know.' *

"Oh, what will be then the pomp, how great the gladness of applauding angels, for that she now merits to have her dwelling in heaven who lived here on earth a heavenly life! Then Mary taking once more the timbrel will awake the virgin choirs, as they sing to the Lord of their having passed over the sea of the world.† Then shall each one exult saying, *I will go in unto the altar of my God, even to the God who maketh glad my youth. I immolate to God a sacrifice of praise, and I pay my vows to the Most High.*" ‡

"Come Eve, now sober: come Eve, in thine own person once upon a time intemperate, but now in thy offspring fasting. Come Eve, no longer one to be shut out from paradise, but rather to be rapt up to heaven. Come Eve, now Sara, since thou bearest children not in sorrow but in joy, not in grief but in laughter. May many and many an Isaac be born to thee. Come once more, Eve, now Sara, of whom may it be said to her husband: *Hearken to Sara thy wife.*§ Albeit thou art subject to a husband—for so it befits thee to be—yet soon hast thou loosed the sentence, seeing that thy husband is bidden to hearken to thee.

"Now if Sara by giving birth to a type of Christ, merits to be hearkened to by her husband, how great advantage accrues to the sex through its bringing forth Christ, and that without loss of virginity. Come then, Eve, now Mary, who hast not only given us an incentive to virginity, but also brought to us God. Hence in joy and exultation at so great a boon Isaias says: *Behold a Virgin shall conceive in her womb and bear a Son, and His name shall be called Emmanuel, which is interpreted, God with us.* Whence this gift? In truth, not from earth; but from heaven Christ elected for Himself this vessel whereby He might descend, and hath sanctified a temple of purity. By one woman He descended, but many women has He called. And hence too the Lord's Mary obtained this special name which signifies, God from my origin (Deus ex genere meo). Many others before were called Mary. Aaron's sister for example.¶ But that name of Mary signified the bitterness of the sea. The Lord therefore came into the bitterness of human frailty, that the bitterness of man's condition might become sweet, tempered by the suavity

* Compare *John* xvii. 24, 25. † *Exod.* xv. 20.

‡ *Ps.* xlii. 4, xlix. 14. *De Virginibus*, L. ii. c. 2. P. L. tom. 16, p. 220 *sq.* S. Augustine, treating of the style in which various Fathers before his time wrote, praises that of S. Ambrose as temperate, ornate, and eloquent. He quotes as a specimen, a passage from the holy doctor's treatise, *De Virginibus*, describing the virtues of the Blessed Virgin, which we have just rendered ("Virgo erat non solum corpore . . . cibus plerumque obvius," etc.). S. Ambrose, says S. Augustine, wrote in such a way as not only to show the life that professed virgins should lead, but also to enkindle and excite, by his great eloquence, many with the love of chastity, and to lead many to make the vow of virginity, who had not yet made it. (*De Doctrina Christiana*, L. iv. c. 121, n. 48.)

§ *Gen.* xxi. 12. || *Is.* vii. 14, *Matt.* i. 52. ¶ *Exod.* xv. 20.

and grace of the heavenly Word. This was signified by the fountain of Mara which was sweetened by the tree, to show, that whether the Gentile people, bitter before by sins, or our flesh, should be changed to other ways by the temperament of the Lord's Passion.

"Illustrious then is Mary who bore aloft the sign of holy Virginity, and raised on high for Christ the pious standard of inviolate chastity. And yet whilst all are invited to the practice of virginity by the example of holy Mary, there have been those who would deny that she persevered a Virgin. . . ." *

"Since thou art once for all dead to the world, touch not, I beg thee, Ambrosia, handle not any more the things of the world; † but ever in psalms, and hymns and spiritual canticles, withdraw thyself from the world's converse, singing not to man but to God.‡ And as was used to do the holy Mary, ponder in thy heart.§ As a good little lamb, do thou too ruminate in thy mouth the divine commandments, that thou also mayest say, *I shall be exercised in Thy wondrous works.* ||

"Countless thanks, O Father of grace, we render to Thy goodness, for that we see here on earth in holy virgins that life of Angels, which we had lost of old in paradise. For what more couldest Thou have granted, whether for the imitation of virgins' devotion, for the confirmation of virtue, or for celebrating the glory of virginity, than that God should be born of a Virgin? More has guilt profited than injured us: in that our very redemption has found divine employment (in quo redemptio quidem nostra divinum munus invenit).

"Nay, not even Thine Only-begotten Son Himself, in coming here on earth to recover what was lost, was able to find a more pure way of generation for His flesh, than to dedicate for His own dwelling the court of the heavenly Virgin, wherein might be both the sanctuary of immaculate chastity, and the temple of God.

"But why should I here add, that by Thy divine appointment it was a virgin Mary, together with holy Moses and Aaron, who led the march of the Hebrew hosts through the waves of the sea? ¶ I leave ancient records, I seek not private examples: this nobility suffices for the virginal family.

"I beseech Thee that Thou wouldest protect this Thy servant (Ambrosia), who eagerly desires to serve Thee, and to consecrate to Thee her soul, with entire devotion of her chastity. I now, by virtue of my priestly office, commend her to Thee with fatherly affection, that Thou, propitious Prelate, wouldst grant her grace to wake up the Bridegroom, who takes up His abode in the hiding-places of heavenly spouses, so that she may merit to see Him, and be admitted into the nuptial chamber of God her King, and be accounted worthy to hear Him say to her: *Thou art come hither from Libanus, My spouse, thou art come hither from Libanus, thou shalt pass, yea thou shalt pass over from the principle of faith;* ** that thus passing through this world, she may pass on to the eternal ages.

"Have regard, therefore, O Father, to the work (or gift) of Thy goodness,††

* *De Inst. Virg.* cap. v. nn. 34, 35, *Ib.* p. 327. † *Col.* ii. 20, 21.
‡ *Ib.* iii. 16. § *Luke* ii. 19. || *Ps.* cxviii. 27. *Ib.* xvi. n. 103.
¶ *Exod.* xv. 20, 21, *Mich.* vi. 4.
** *Cant.* iv. 8. "Ades huc a Libano, Sponsa, ades huc a Libano, transibis, et pertransibis a principio fidei." *LXX.*
†† "In tuum munus."

for the sanctification whereof Thou didst seek counsel of no one: but thereon, without any suppliant or arbiter, didst confer so great grace, that before the divine oracles had spoken, no one could have believed it, *viz.*, that a Virgin should bear God in her womb. Hence, challenged by the prerogative of this gift of Thy bounty, yearnings after virginity, and examples of holy chastity wax frequent. Through the influence of these it is, that this Thy servant also has been provoked to emulate the grace of this same virtue. May she then assist at Thy altars wearing no longer golden hair in shining tresses, set apart for brilliant nuptials; but such hair as that wherewith the woman in the Gospel, holy Mary (Magdalen), wiped with loving care the feet of Christ, and filled the whole house with the odour of her poured forth ointment, offering, withal, her hair for consecration by a holy veil. . . ."

The holy Doctor then prays that Ambrosia may be adorned with all those virtues which befit her holy profession, as a virgin consecrated to Christ.

"That thus she may walk without stumbling, a companion of virgins, following in the footsteps of the Marys." *

"By a woman came on trouble, by a Virgin salvation took place. Christ chose for Himself, in fact, the special gift of virginity, and showed forth the privilege of integrity; representing, as He did, in Himself what He had chosen in His Mother." †

S. MAXIMUS OF TURIN.

"*Glory to God in the highest: and on earth peace to men of good will.* It was meet that an incorrupt will should possess the Saviour to Whom immaculate virginity gave birth. And as Mary was inviolate in bearing Him, so too should our mind be without defilement in keeping Him. For Mary bore in a sense the type of our souls. For just as Christ looked for virginity in His Mother, so does He require integrity in our affection. Since the soul that is virgin ‡ from sins, both conceives and brings forth the Saviour by praising and making Him known; but keeps Him by fulfilling His commandments. For faith retains Him when conceived, confession gives Him birth, and carefulness keeps Him when born." §

"Since throughout the world the virginal flower of Mary weaves unfading crowns, and guards with immaculate affection the regal court of chastity; so far has inviolate purity attained to the palm, as, amongst young maidens, to seize upon the trophy of sanctity, and following in the footsteps of the Virgin Mother to arrive at the heavenly bride-chamber. Hence it is that Agnes declares herself espoused with the ring of fidelity, and cries out that she is constrained by love. . . .

"Let pious women follow the holy women of old, Sara, Rebecca, Rachel, Anna, Susanna and Sephora: but let the virgins of Christ follow the Virgin Mother of the Virgin Light. . . . Happy the band of virgins, whose study it is to

* *Ib.* nn. 104-113. † *Ep.* 42-3.

‡ "What is virginity of the soul? Entire faith, firm hope, sincere charity." S. Augustine, *In Joann.* Tr. xiii. n. 12.

§ *Hom.* xxi. P. L. Tom. 57, p. 469.

follow in the traces of thy confession, O Agnes, for with thee they will have a crown in heaven, since with thee they conquer the enemy in the world. For as was given to thee, through following the footsteps of Mary, a share in the eternal reward, so we believe, to those who imitate thee everlasting joys will not be denied." *

S. LEANDER, Archbishop of Seville.

"You virgins are the élite of the body of Christ. You are therefore, from the whole mass of Christ's body, oblations acceptable to God, and consecrated on the heavenly altars. For both on account of your holy profession, and the Church's own faith it is, that the entire Church has acquired the name of Virgin; whilst in her eyes the better and more fervent part are you, who have dedicated to Christ the integrity of your soul and body. For although by her faith the Church remains a Virgin in all her members generally, yet in a part of her members, which you are, she is, not without reason, a Virgin in body also: according to that manner of speaking whereby either the whole is called after a part, or a part after the whole. . . . Participation in your joy, too, has Mary, the Lord's Mother, the summit and pattern (apex et specimen) of virginity, that Mother of incorruption, who has brought you forth by her example, herself remaining inviolate. By her teaching she gave you birth, and yet knew no pangs, even as she brought forth the Bridegroom, and is Virgin still. Happy that womb that knew child-bearing, yet no corruption. Blessed that fecundity, which by bringing forth has filled the world, inherited the heavens, and yet not lost the veil of virginity. Let thy heart burn, my sister, with that fire which Christ cast upon the earth. May the flame of this His fire, and that virginal choir which follows Mary, urge thee on. Keep her therefore in the mind's eye. . . . Many virgins will be in thy company: with them thou wilt easily obtain for me what thou shalt ask. Nay, Mary, the Mother and leader of virgins, will herself intercede with her Son, on account of thy merit. And should it be burdensome for thee to pray for me, she will for thy sake herself raise me up when I chance to fall, and console me when sorrowing from guilt of conscience.

"Meditate on the virginity and poverty of Mary who was so rich in the Lord, as to merit to be the Lord's Mother, and yet was so miserably poor as to have, at the time of the birth, no solace of nurse or maid, and her lodging so straitened as to use a manger for a cradle. S. Joseph also, to whom she was espoused, as being a just man, was yet so poor, as to have to seek for food and clothing by the labour of his hands." †

* *Serm.* lvii. on S. Agnes V. M.; *Ib.* pp. 643-7, where the genuineness of this Sermon is defended against some critics.

† *Regula*, addressed to his sister Florentina, Patr. Lat. Tom. 72, p. 877.

CHAPTER VI.

THE BLESSED VIRGIN AND THE CHURCH.

A COMPARISON is frequently instituted in the writings of the Fathers between the Blessed Virgin and the Holy Church, and the points of their mutual resemblance are noted. Thus each is an ever-virgin Mother—Mary the Mother of the Divine Incarnate Word, the Church of the members of His mystical Body. Mary is also, as well as the Church, the spiritual Mother of all the faithful. Both are queens, both virginal spouses of Jesus Christ.

Mary is sometimes identified, so to say, in patristic language and thought with the Church. And this, because she is the most excellent member of that Body of which her Divine Son is the Head. Hence the Fathers often make use of the same terms of eulogy to describe, at one time Our Lady, at another time the Church, and apply interchangeably the same prophecies, figures, and types, as with equal propriety belonging to both. Thus S. Basil and some Fathers represent the Church as typified by the high mountain of Isaias' vision, which S. Gregory the Great and others explain as prefiguring the Blessed Virgin.

It is more usual to regard Our Lady as the type of the Church, but S. Ambrose in his comments on the Canticle of Canticles speaks of the Church as the type of Mary.

All the sublime qualities and glorious prerogatives attributed to Christ's Church, are in the writings of the Fathers ascribed also to His Blessed Mother. We shall see, moreover, that, in some of the very earliest Christian writings and in those of Fathers later on, the Church is called by the name of Mary, and Mary is called the Church. So intimate was the union between the two in the mind of the faithful of those first ages.*

* This identification or compenetration of the two ideas of Our Blessed Lady and the Church seems to find its expression in the female *Orante*, which is so often found depicted in the Catacombs as a companion to the Good Shepherd. See *Roma Sotterranea*, by Northcote and Brownlow, vol. ii. pp. 134-143.

THE EPISTLE OF THE CHURCHES OF LYONS AND VIENNE.

This Epistle giving an account of the martyrs in these Churches A.D. 177, was probably written by S. Irenæus.* Speaking of those who had at first apostatised, but through the example and prayers of the martyrs again confessed the faith, it is said:—

"And much joy came upon *the Virgin Mother* when those whom she had cast forth as lifeless abortions, the same she received again as living. For by means of the martyrs the greater number of those who had denied the faith, were taken again to the womb. Being conceived a second time and quickened anew, they learned to make profession; and, now alive and braced with strength, went forward to the tribunals." †

CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA.

"O mystic marvel! One Father of all things, and one Word of all things, and the Holy Ghost, One and the same everywhere, and one only Mother Virgin. Dear to me it is *to call her the Church.* This same only Mother had not milk,‡ since she alone was not a married woman, but Virgin is she and Mother at the same time: inviolate, indeed, as Virgin, but loving as Mother. And calling to her her little children, she nourishes them with holy milk, even the infantile (*βρεφώδει*) Word. For this same reason it was she had not milk, because this little Infant was Himself milk, beautiful, and her very own (*οἰκεῖον*), nurturing with the Word the new people that the Lord Himself brought forth with pangs of flesh, and wrapped in the swathing-bands of His Precious Blood. Oh, the holy Childbirth [or, the holy new-born babes, *λοχευμάτων*]! Oh, the holy swathing-bands! The Word is all things to the little Infant, both father and mother, and pedagogue, and nurse. *Eat*, says He, *My flesh, and drink My blood.* With these His own nourishments at His own cost the Lord provides us. He both gives us His flesh, and pours forth blood. And nothing is wanting for the growth of His little ones." §

* S. Irenæus speaks of "Mary crying out and prophesying on behalf of the Church, *My soul doth magnify the Lord*," etc. (Hær. L. iii. c. x. n. 2).

† Eusebius, *H. E.* Lib. v. 31, Patr. Gr. Tom. 20, p. 425.

‡ Such was the singular opinion of Clement.

§ *Pædagogus*, Lib. i. c. 6, Patr. Gr. Tom. 8, p. 301. "If the Church is like Mary, Mary is the living form of the Church, and it is through her that God pours into the Church life and fecundity—that divine fecundity which after having brought forth the First-born from Mary according to the flesh, brings forth her *other children*, members of this First-born, according to the spirit. The assimilation of the Church with Mary is in the same proportion as the assimilation of the members with the Head. They are of one same Mother, as with Jesus Christ they are one body; whilst in this one single maternity Mary has the higher prerogative of bringing forth the Head, by whom and in whom is the bringing forth of the members. The Church is thus, so to say, the expansion of the maternity of Mary—it is the mystical womb of Mary, which gives birth to the mystical body of Christ." Auguste Nicolas. *La Vierge Marie.*

S. ARCHELAUS.

S. Archelaus, Bishop of Caschar in Mesopotamia, a disciple of Origen, held a disputation with the heretic Manes, about 279. The Acts of this discussion were drawn up in Syriac by the holy bishop; and these, translated soon after into Greek, were evidently the source whence the Fathers of the fourth century drew, for what they have recorded of the life of Manes—v.g. S. Cyril of Jerusalem,* S. Epiphanius,† Socrates,‡ and Theodoret.§ These Acts for the greater part now exist only in an ancient Latin version.‖

Manes asserted that Jesus Christ appeared under the outward form of man, yet was not born of Mary, but came down from the bosom of the Father. He supported his heresy by the words in the Gospel, *Who is My mother, and who are My brethren?* arguing that if Mary was His Mother, then He had brethren by Mary, and that these were either born of her through Joseph, or the Holy Ghost. If not by the Holy Ghost, then one must be free to admit, that "after the overshadowing of the Holy Ghost, after the embassy of Gabriel, that most chaste Virgin and *immaculate Church*¶ had other children by Joseph."

Archelaus confutes him, proving that Jesus Christ was truly born of the Blessed Virgin, and thus continues:—

"But I desire to show yet further to all, that every one may see how impious is thy assertion. For if, as thou sayest, He was not born, then doubtless He did not suffer, for to suffer is impossible for one not born. But if He did not suffer, then the name of the Cross is taken away. And the Cross done away with, Jesus did not rise from the dead. But if Jesus rose not from the dead, then no one else will rise. But if no one else will rise, there will be no Judgment. Since it is certain that if I shall not rise again, I shall not be judged. But if there will be no Judgment, in vain will be the observance of God's commandments, and there is no place left for self-restraint; and so, *Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die.*** For all this thou impliest in denying that He was born of Mary. Whereas if thou confessest Him born of Mary, His Passion necessarily follows, and after the

* *Catech.* 6. † *Hær.* 66. ‡ *H. E.* i. 22. § *Hæret. Fabul.* i. 26, v. 9.

‖ Moehler, Author of *Symbolism*, in his posthumous work, *Patrology of the first three centuries*, says that the genuineness of this Latin version is quite certain.

¶ By thus ironically calling the Blessed Virgin the Church it would seem that this was a phrase then commonly received, as we have seen it used by Clement of Alexandria. S. Victorinus in the 3d century, in his interpretation of the Woman in the Apocalypse, identifies, so to say, the Church with the Blessed Virgin. See *infra*, *The Assumption*, init., Footnote.

** 1 *Cor.* vi. 14.

Passion, the Resurrection; and after the Resurrection, Judgment; and thus the precepts of Scripture are saved for us. This therefore is no vain question, but very much is contained in this assertion. For just as all the Law and the Prophets are contained in two words, so also all our hope hangs upon the Childbirth of Blessed Mary." *

S. METHODIUS.

Any one who reads the magnificent treatise of S. Methodius, *The Banquet of the Ten Virgins*, can hardly fail to be struck with surprise at the silence of the Saint in regard to the Blessed Virgin. Sometimes it would seem that he must speak of her—when commenting on the 44th *Psalm*, vv. 10-16—as the Queen and Spouse. But no. He interprets the passage now of the Church exclusively, or again of the Human Nature of Christ. So too when his theme is the Model and Mother of Virgins, it is the Church alone. In the more than two hundred pages there is but one short passage that bears upon Our Lady, besides the following, which occurs in the wondrously beautiful Hymn of Thecla towards the close of the treatise.

". . . Thy Mother too who gave Thee life, Grace pure and unspotted, who, whilst bearing Thine own immaculate conception in her chaste inviolate womb, had the appearance, Virgin though she was, of having betrayed the marriage-bed; and now with child, she, the Blessed One, thus spake: I keep myself pure for Thee, and holding light-bearing torches, O Bridegroom, I go to meet Thee." Σοῦ καὶ ζωητόκος Χάρις ἄθικτος, ἀτεγκτος, ἀσπίλους τὰς σὰς γονὰς ἐν ἀσπόρῳ φέρουσα νηδύι, μορφὴν ὑπέσχεν ὡς προδοῦσα λέκτρα Πάρθενος· ἔλεξε δ' ἔγκυος, Μάκαρ· Ἀγνεύω σοι, καὶ λαμπάδας φαεσφόρους κρατοῦσα, Νυμφιέ, ὑπαντάνω σοι.†

It is well to remark how S. Methodius makes use of the very same terms and imagery, when he speaks of the Church, as are found commonly in the works of the Fathers, and in writings ascribed to himself, in their praises of the Blessed Virgin, thus:—

"With hymns, O blessed spouse of God, adorning the bridal bed, we now venerate thee, pure virgin Church of snowy body, beautiful with dark tresses, thou chaste, blameless, well-beloved one."

"And that the Word made man became Chief Virgin in the same way as He was Chief Shepherd, and Chief Prophet of the Church, the Christ-possessed John shows us, saying in the Book of the Apocalypse: *And I beheld; and lo a Lamb stood upon Mount Sion, and with Him an hundred forty-four thousand having His name, and the name of His Father written on their foreheads.* . . .

* *Acta Disputationis S. Archelai cum Manete Hæresiarcha*, Patr. Gr. Tom. 11, pp. 1308-12.

† *Conviv. Dec. Virg.* Patr. Gr. Tom. 18, p. 211.

*They are virgins. These follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth.** Thus he shows that the Lord is leader of the choir of virgins." †

"For the clouds which come from the evil one are driven away by the Spirit, if ye too, like your Mother who gives birth to the Male Virgin in heaven, be no way terrified by the serpent that lies in wait, and plots against you." ‡

One would suppose that the Mother here spoken of was the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Mother of the Incarnate Word whom S. Methodius calls *the Chief Virgin*—and that this "Chief Virgin" and "the Male Virgin in heaven," were identical in the Saint's mind. This however is not so, for, interpreting the Apocalyptic vision, § he goes on to say:—

"The woman who appeared in heaven clothed with the sun, and crowned with twelve stars, and having the moon for her footstool, and being with child, and travailing in birth, is properly, according to the accurate interpretation, our Mother, O virgins, being a power by herself distinct from her children; she, whom the prophets, according to the aspect of their subjects, have called sometimes a Bride, sometimes Mount Sion, and sometimes the Temple and Tabernacle of God. For she is that power spoken of by the prophet as urgently encouraged to be enlightened, when the Spirit cried: *Arise, be enlightened, O Jerusalem, for thy light is come,*|| etc. It is the Church, to whom her children, hastening to her from all sides, will come in full force after the resurrection, when she has received that Light that knows no setting, and clad with the splendour of the Word as with a garment, rejoices. . . ." ¶

"If some one should reply . . . But how, O virgins, can this explanation seem to you to be according to the mind of Scripture, when the Apocalypse plainly affirms that the Church brings forth a male, and you teach that her labour-pains are fulfilled in those who are washed in the laver? We will answer him thus: But, O fault-finder, not even to thee will it be easy to show that Christ Himself is the one who is born.** For long before the Apocalypse was the mystery of the Incarnation of the Word accomplished—and John is speaking of things present and things to come." ††

S. ZENO.

"If the Church is the Spouse of Christ, it is because she is chaste. For the same reason is she honoured with the yoke of a heavenly marriage, because even after the nuptials she remains thenceforth a perpetual virgin. We then who are born of so great a wedlock ought together to strive by every

* *Apoc.* xiv. 1-4.
† *Dec. Virg.* Or. i. c. 5, p. 45, *Ib.*
‡ *Ib.* Or. viii. c. 4, p. 144.
§ *Apoc.* xii. 1-6.
|| *Is.* lx. 1-4.
¶ *Ibid.* c. 5, p. 145.
** "It is hardly necessary to observe, that amid many interpretations of the passage, this which Methodius condemns, is probably the true one, as it is certainly the most natural." *Ante-Nicene Christian Library*, ad loc.
†† *Ib.* c. 8, p. 148.

means to commend the nobility of our ancestry, not only by our relationship, but also by faithful resemblance." *

"Thamar conceived in the womb, the Church conceived in the heart, the former by seed, the latter by the word." †

S. EPHREM.

"Why did the Lord first show His resurrection to a woman and not to men? A mystery is here revealed to us with regard to the Church and the Lord's Mother. The Virgin received the first beginning of His advent on earth, and to a woman He Himself showed His resurrection from the sepulchre. Both at the beginning and at the end it is His Mother's name that is there, and resounds. It was a Mary that received Him on His coming into life, and saw also the angels at the sepulchre. The Virgin Mary is, again, the figure of the Church, which received the first-fruits of the Gospel. Mary saw Him, as representing the Church. Blessed is He who brought joy to the Church and to Mary. Let us call the Church by the name of Mary; for she is worthy of the double name. Mary ran first to Simon the foundation, and announced to him, as though to the Church, and told him that she had seen the risen Lord. With good reason was the news that the Son had risen again, brought to Simon, because he was the rock and foundation of the Church chosen from among the nations.

"Therefore it was that Mary ran and brought the tidings to the much loved ones, Simon the true Rock, and John the son of Zebedee. . . .

"Now Mary, the figure of the Church, looked in into the interior of the sepulchre." ‡

"The Mary who saw Him is a figure of the former Church that saw the sign of His Advent." §

"On a certain day a pearl did I take up, my brethren, I saw in it mysteries pertaining to the Kingdom. . . . In its brightness I beheld the Bright One Who cannot be clouded, and in its pureness a great mystery, even the Body of our Lord which is well-refined; in its undividedness I saw the Truth which is undivided. It was so that I saw there its pure conception, the Church, and the Son within it. The cloud was the likeness of her that bare Him, and her type the heaven, since there glistened from her His gracious Shining. . . ." ||

Fr. Morris on these words says: "Its pure Conception, *i.e.*, the Pearl's, *i.e.*, Christ's, the true Pearl's. The passage is rather obscurely worded, its meaning seems to be, I saw His pure Conception of Mary, who with the Son within her is a type of the Church. This passage may be illustrated by the following, from Aretas' *Catena on the Apocalypse* xii. 2, p. 351, 1, 9.

* Tr. iv. n. 1, p. 290.

† *Ib.* Tr. xiv. n. 4, p. 438.

‡ *Sermo ad Nocturnum Dominicæ Resurrectionis*, 2, 3, Lamy, vol. i. pp. 531-537. See *supra*, pp. 191, 192.

§ *Hymn. De Crucifixione* v. 17, *Ib.* p. 683.

|| S. Ephrem, *The Pearl, or Seven Rhythms on the Faith*, i. 1, Opp. Syr. T. iii. p. 150.

"'Some have taken the vision to refer to the Mother of the Lord . . . whom as being pure and free from things earthly, he describes to be in heaven and not upon earth, being as the Angels: and yet, though so highly excelling in purity, she partook of our lump: for what is it that David saith of the Lord's conception? *He shall descend as rain upon a fleece, and as a drop which droppeth upon the earth;* meaning by *earth* the Holy Mother of the Lord, in that she was consubstantial with us earthly beings. But let Eutyches, his impious dogma touching the Mother of God and the Lord's Incarnation, be cast forth out of the divine precincts. And that she was clothed with the sun, and had the moon under her feet, Habacuc is a sufficient voucher in those words of his: *The sun was lifted up, and the moon stood still in her order*, meaning the Sun of Justice, Christ the Saviour, who by the preaching of the Gospel was exalted and set aloft: while the moon, that is, the Jews' Synagogue, no longer received after Christ's manifestation any accession by proselytes from the Gentiles. . . . With this too what Gabriel said to the Virgin harmoniseth: *The power of the Most High shall overshadow thee:* for to have a covering cast about one (to be clothed), is all one with being overshadowed. Others again, of whom is S. Methodius* of Patara, adapt the vision to holy Church, as considering that this passage does not go well with the Lord's Birth, because He had been brought forth such a long while before it. The Church then is clad with the Sun of Justice, and also has the light of the Law, that nightly-shining moon.'

"The fact, however, that two views of the passage existed, shows that it admitted a twofold application. S. Epiphanius inclines to applying it to S. Mary,† while S. Austin says:—

"'The Woman signifies Mary, who, being spotless, brought forth our spotless Head. Who herself also showed forth in herself a figure of holy Church, so that as she in bringing forth a Son remained a Virgin, so the Church also should during the whole of time be bringing forth His members, and yet not lose her virgin estate.'‡

"This view of Mary, as the type of the Church, seems necessary to reconcile the two interpretations."§

Fr. Morris commenting on S. Ephrem's words: "The cloud was the likeness of her that bare Him," cites the Saint on *Jerem.* xliii. 7, when, referring to *Isaias* xix. 1, he says:—

"'The cloud on which the Lord rode, figureth to us the Mother of God, the Virgin Mary.'"

"S. Jerome, and S. Ambrose," continues Fr. Morris, "give the same interpretation, Aretas on *Apoc.* xiv. 14, says:—

"'This cloud the divine Fathers have taken of Mary the ever-Virgin.'"

"Theodoret also, though less distinctly gives the same interpretation.

* *Conviv. Virg.* viii. 7. † *Hær.* 78, n. 11.
‡ *De Trad. Symb. ad Catech.* iv. 1.
§ Morris, *Select Works of S. Ephrem*, p. 85.

"On S. Ephrem's words, 'Her type the heaven,' the Saint's language elsewhere will serve us as a comment:—

"'She is the new heaven, wherein the King of kings dwelt: He rose in her, and came out into the world, having framed and put on the likeness of her;' and a little before, 'To us did Mary to-day become the heaven which bore up God; for into her did there come down and dwell the Godhead Most High, . . . from her there rose to us a Star, and He folded back the darkness of the Gentiles.'* And again, 'Mary is the gate of the Bright One (that is, Star), by whose means were enlightened the world and its inhabitants that were in the dark.'" †

"S. Ephrem under the name of the *Pearl*, signifying the Faith says:—

"'In it we may see expressed the Church, the immaculate Offspring of the same pearl, and seated therein the Son of God, and seated by her Son His own Mother who was formerly signified by the cloud and by heaven, whence that Light that emanates from Light has shone upon us.'" ‡

S. EPIPHANIUS.

"From Mary is taken that Scripture which is applicable also to the Church: *For this cause . . . one flesh;* whereon the holy Apostle says: *This is a great sacrament: but I speak as to Christ and the Church.*§ And observe the accuracy of the Scriptures. For of Adam it is said, that God formed him; but of Eve it is not said, she was formed, but was 'built.' Since we read that God took one of Adam's ribs, and built it for him into a woman; thus to show, that when the Lord had formed again a body for Himself from Mary, it was from the Rib from her the Church was built, in the piercing of His side, and from the mysteries of the Blood and Water were made baths for us." ||

S. AMBROSE.

"See then how great are the merits of virginity. Christ before the Virgin, Christ from the Virgin: born, indeed, of the Father before all ages, but born of the Virgin for the sake of the ages. The one He is of His own nature, the other for our profit: the one always, the other of His own will. Behold yet another merit of virginity: Christ the Virgin's Spouse, and, if it may be so said, Christ of virginal chastity; for virginity is of Christ, not Christ of virginity.¶ A virgin therefore it is who has married, a virgin who has borne us in her womb, a virgin who has brought us forth, a virgin who has nourished us with her own milk, of whom we read: *How great things has the virgin Jerusalem wrought! The breasts shall not fail from the rock, nor snow from Libanus, nor shall the water that is borne by the strong wind run away.*** How

* *De Laud. B.M.V.* Tom. iii. p. 607. † Tom. ii. p. 329 e., Morris, p. 84.
‡ Hymn vii. *De Margarita* Assemani, *Bibl. Orient.* T. 1, p. 115, n. 8.
§ *Ephes.* v. 31, 32. || *Hær.* 78, n. 20.
¶ Christ is called ὁ Παρθένικος Λόγος, by S. Ambrose, *Ep.* 31, n. 3.
** *Jer.* xviii. 13.

great is this virgin that is bedewed from the fountains of the Trinity; on whom the waters flow from the rock, whose breasts fail not, upon whom is poured honey. Now, according to the Apostle, the Rock is Christ. Therefore from Christ the breasts fail not, from God comes the brightness, from the Spirit, the stream. This is the Trinity that irrigates His Church, the Father, Christ, and the Spirit." *

"Many women has Holy Scripture brought out to light; but the palm of public salvation it has given to virgins alone. In the Old Testament it is a virgin who led the Hebrew people, hemmed in by land and sea, dry shod through the waters. In the Gospel it is a Virgin who gave birth to the Maker and Redeemer of the world. The Church is a virgin, whom the Apostle so greatly desired to espouse as a chaste virgin to Christ. The daughter of Sion is a virgin. A virgin is that city of Jerusalem which is in heaven. Whereinto enters nothing common or unclean. Virgin too is she whom Jesus calls, to whom too He said: *Thou art come from Libanus, My Spouse,*" etc.†

"Let us now bring forward that celebrated passage of the Apostle where it is written: *For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother; and shall cleave to his wife, and they shall be two in one flesh. This is a great sacrament: but I speak in Christ and in the Church.*‡ We remark, then, that by a woman has this heavenly mystery of the Church been fulfilled, in her grace has been figured forth, for whose sake Christ came down, and accomplished that eternal work of human redemption. Hence, too, Adam called the name of his wife *Life;* § for it is by means of a woman that the series and propagation of the human race is diffused through the world, and by means of the Church that eternal life is bestowed." ||

"By the woman here we may also understand the Blessed Virgin Mary, because she is the Mother of the Church, for she brought forth Him who is the Head of the Church, and is herself the daughter of the Church, since she is the greatest member of the Church. The dragon, then, stood before the woman, that on her giving birth he might devour her Son; because at the outset of Christ's birth the dragon had the intention of slaying Him by means of Herod his minister. He stands also before the woman, that is to say, the Church, in order to destroy by temptation to evil those whom by baptism she brings forth to God." ¶

"It was fitting that Mary should be espoused, and at the same time a Virgin; because she is the type of the Church, which is spotless, and yet married. For virgin she has conceived us of the Spirit; and virgin, without pangs, she has given us birth. There was perhaps another reason why holy Mary was married to one, and filled by Another, *viz.*, because individual Churches are filled with the Spirit and grace, but yet are united to a visible temporal priest." **

* *De Officiis Ministrorum*, Lib. i. cap. v. 22.

† *Cant.* iv. 8, *Ib.* 28.

‡ *Eph.* v. 31, 32.

§ *Gen.* ii. 23.

|| *Ib.* iii. 24.

¶ *Expositio Apocalypsis*, int. Opp. S. Ambrosii, *ad Apoc.* xii. 4. See *In Luc.* Lib. x. n. 134.

** *In Luc.* L. ii. n. 7. "Junguntur ad temporalis speciem sacerdotis"—where Sacerdos is used for Bishop, as in S. Cyprian, and S. Augustine, *Contr. Jul. Pel.* ii. 33 *sq.*

S. CHRYSOSTOM.

"Who is she who receives the inheritance? The Church and her fulness, whereof Paul says: *I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ,** and John: *He that hath the bride, is the bridegroom.*† . . . As the bride does all things to please her husband, so also should we throughout our life. As the bride sits the day long in her chamber having one only care, how she may please the bridegroom, so we too, set as we are in this life, should have but one thing in view, to please the Bridegroom, and to keep the good order of the Bride. Of this Bride David makes mention when he says: *The queen stood at thy right hand, clad around in gilded vesture, clothed in variegated garments with golden borders.*‡ Dost thou desire to see her shoes? Hear Paul the Bridegroom's friend,§ saying: *Their feet shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace.*‖ Wouldst thou see too her girdle, and how she is bound together by truth? Again, he will tell thee: *Having your loins girt about with truth.*¶ And her beauty also? This too thou wilt learn from him: *Not having spot or wrinkle.*** And hear the Preacher what he says about her: *Thou art all fair, O my love, and there is not a spot in thee.*†† Wouldst thou see her feet? *How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the Gospel of peace, of them that bring glad tidings of good things.*‡‡ And what is verily admirable and most astonishing, that even after adorning her in this manner, He came not to show forth His own glory, lest He should astound her with the excess of His beauty, and make her beside herself, but He came clad in a garment like that of the spouse: for He partakes of blood and flesh equally with her: and He calls not her up on high, but Himself comes to her, keeping here too the bridegroom's law that takes him to the bride. As also said Moses, *For this shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife*, and Paul: *This is a great sacrament (mystery), but I speak as to Christ and as to the Church.*§§ On coming, then, to her abode, and finding her filthy, shrivelled, naked, soiled with blood, He washed, anointed, nourished her, put on her a garment, the like of which cannot be found. Himself having become to her a clothing, He took her, and thus led her upwards. For her, then, has the inheritance been prepared."‖‖

"The flower of virginity: this is the garment of the Church."¶¶

"Keep not aloof from the Church: for nothing is stronger than the Church. The Church is thy hope, the Church thy salvation, the Church thy refuge. She is higher than heaven, broader than the earth. She never grows old, but is ever in full bloom. Therefore to show her stability and firmness, Scripture calls her a mountain; to show her incorruptibility, calls her a virgin; and her magnificence, calls her a queen; her relationship with God, calls her a daughter; on account of her many children, calls her that was barren, mother of seven. A myriad are her names, showing forth her nobility. For as her Lord has many names, and is called Father, and Way, and Life, and Light, and Arm, and Propitiation, and Foundation, and Door, and Sinless,

* 2 *Cor.* xi. 2. † *John* iii. 29. ‡ *Ps.* xliv. 11.

§ τοῦ νυμφαγωγοῦ, who negotiates the marriage, *i.e.*, who espouses souls to Christ: as he himself says: *I have espoused you*, etc.

‖ *Eph.* vi. 15. ¶ *Ib.* 14. ** *Ib.* 27.

†† *Cant.* iv. 7. ‡‡ *Is.* lii. 7, *Rom.* x. 15. §§ *Gen.* ii. 24, *Eph.* v. 32.

‖‖ *In Tit. Ps.* v. n. 2, Opp., Tom. v. p. 62, Migne. ¶¶ *Ib.* p. 202.

and Treasure, and Lord, and God, and Son, and Only-begotten, and Form of God, and Image of God.—Does one name suffice to represent the whole? By no means. And therefore He has many names, that we may learn something about God, though it be but little—So too the Church has many names. She is called a Virgin, for all that she was before a harlot. For what is wonderful in the Bridegroom is, that He took a harlot, and made her a Virgin. O thing new and admirable! Marriage, with us, dissolves virginity, marriage, with God, resuscitates virginity. With us she that was a virgin, when married is no longer a virgin; with Christ she that was a harlot, when married, becomes a virgin.

"Let him only explain this—the heretic who is over-curious about the Divine generation, and says, How did the Father beget?—Say to him, How did the Church that was a harlot, become a Virgin? How did she who gave birth remain a Virgin? *For I am jealous of you*, says Paul, *with the jealousy of God. For I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.*" *

S. AUGUSTINE.

"Let us celebrate with joy the day on which Mary gave birth to the Saviour; a married woman to the Creator of marriage; a Virgin, to the Prince of virgins; one given to a husband, yet mother not by her husband; virgin before wedlock, virgin in wedlock; a virgin pregnant, a virgin giving milk. For in no way by His birth did the Almighty Son detract from the integrity of that holy Mother of whom He elected to be born. Good, indeed, is fecundity in marriage, but better is integrity in sanctification. The Man Christ therefore, who as God was able to accord this double blessing—for He who is Man, is also God—would never give to His Mother that blessing which the married love, in such a way as to deprive her of that better thing, for the sake of which virgins spurn to be mothers. The holy Church, then, celebrates to-day the Virgin's Childbirth. For to her the Apostle says, *I have joined you to one husband, to present to Christ a chaste virgin.*† How *a chaste virgin* amongst so many peoples of either sex, amongst so many, not only youths and virgins, but also married folk, fathers and mothers? How, I say, *a chaste virgin*, save in the integrity of faith, hope, and charity? Wherefore Christ when He would make the Church's virginity to be in the heart, first preserved that of Mary in the body. For, indeed, in earthly marriages a woman is given to her husband to be a virgin no longer; but the Church could not be virgin, unless she found, as the Spouse to whom she was to be given, the Son of a Virgin." ‡

"The Infant Spouse went forth from His bridechamber, that is, from the virginal womb, without scath to His Mother's virginity. For then verily it was that the Only-begotten Son of God deigned to assume human nature, that He might unite to Himself, the spotless Head, the spotless Church; which the Apostle calls a virgin, not only taking account of the virgins in

* 2 *Cor.* xi. 2, *Hom. De Capt. Eutrop.*, etc., n. 6, 7, Opp., Tom. iii. p. 403. We cite these beautiful passages from S. Chrysostom, because nearly all the texts and figures which he here refers to the Church, are applied by other Fathers also to the Blessed Virgin, as may be seen above in the Chapter on Scriptural Exegesis.

† 2 *Cor.* xi. 2.

‡ Serm. 188, *In Nat. Dom.* v. n. 4.

body within her, but also from the desire he had to see the souls of all incorrupt. *For*, says he, *I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.* The Church then, in imitating the Mother of the Lord, since she could not do so in body, is yet both mother and virgin in spirit. Think not, then that Christ by His birth in any way detracted from the virginity of His Mother—He who made the Church virgin by redeeming her from the fornication of demons (*i.e.*, idolatry). It is from this incorrupt virginity that you have been brought forth, O holy virgins, who spurning earthly nuptials, have elected to be virgins in flesh also. Celebrate, then, with solemnity and joy this day of the virginal Childbirth. . . . He who has conferred on you this privilege so dear to you, has not taken it away from His Mother. He who heals in you what you inherited from Eve —far be it from you to think that He should not keep intact what you have so much loved in Mary. You follow the footsteps of the Virgin . . . imitate her as much as you are able; not indeed by fecundity; for this you cannot do whilst preserving virginity. . . . She alone had this double prerogative, she who gave birth to the Omnipotent. . . . But think not, therefore, that Christ is nothing to you, because He is Son of one only Virgin. Him, whom you cannot give birth to in flesh, you may have in heart for your Spouse. . . . Nor think that you are sterile by remaining virgins. For holy virginity of body brings with it fruitfulness of soul. Do what the Apostle says,—since you think not of things of the world, nor how you may please husbands—think of the things of God, that you may please Him in all things,* and be fruitful, not in body but in soul, by the practice of virtues. . . . What you admire in the flesh of Mary, reproduce in the hiding-places of your soul. Whoso believes in the heart unto justice conceives Christ; whoso confesses unto salvation, brings forth Christ.† Thus may fruitfulness united to persevering virginity abound in your souls." ‡

"Exult ye virgins of Christ, your fellow-companion is the Mother of Christ. You were not able to give birth to Christ, but for Christ's sake you have willed not to give birth. . . . What the womb of Mary did with the flesh of Christ, let your heart do with the law of Christ. For how should you not have part in the Virgin's Childbirth, since you are the members of Christ? Mary brought forth your Head, the Church you. For she too is both mother and virgin: mother by the bowels of charity, virgin by integrity of faith and piety. She brings forth the peoples; but they are members of One, whose body and Spouse she herself is. In this also bearing the likeness of that Virgin, because even in many she is Mother of unity." §

"This is He *beautiful above the sons of men*, the Son of holy Mary, the Bridegroom of the holy Church, whom He has rendered like to His Mother.

* 1 *Cor.* vii. 32-34.

† "'Tis to believers Christ is pleased to come.
The heart of fickle faith that doubts, He spurns
Unhonoured, and withholds His proffered grace.
Virginity and ready faith drink in
Christ to the inmost soul, from whence there formed,
In hiding-places pure, they bring Him forth."
Prudentius, *Apotheosis*, *vv.* 580-4.

‡ *Serm.* 191, *De Nat. Dom.* viii. n. 1-4.

§ *Serm.* 192, *In Nat. Dom.* ix. 2.

For He hath made her for us a mother, and hath kept her for Himself a virgin. To her, it is, S. Paul speaks, *I have joined you as a chaste virgin to Christ.* Of her again he says, that our *mother is not a bond-woman but free,* and that *the children of her who before was desolate are more in number than of her who has a husband.** Thus also in the case of the Church, as in that of Mary, it is perpetual virginity and incorrupt fecundity. For what Mary merited in flesh, the Church has preserved in spirit . . . with this difference, that Mary gave birth to One, whilst the Church gives birth to many, to be gathered together into One, by One [that is, Christ]. . . . *He came forth from His bridechamber, and rejoiced as a giant to run His way.*† . . . Abiding in the bosom of His Father, He filled the womb of His Mother. And in this bride-chamber, that is, in Mary's womb the Divine nature united to itself the human nature; and there the Word was made flesh for us, that going forth from His Mother He might dwell in us; and going before to His Father, He might prepare a place for us wherein to dwell." ‡

"The Church . . . imitating Christ's Mother, every day gives birth to His members, and is a virgin." §

Speaking of the Church, S. Augustine uses the same terms as he does elsewhere of Mary:—

"She (the Church) is not bound by this sentence of Eve, who in sorrow and groaning brings forth children—and they themselves not joying, but rather weeping. The former has loosed what the latter had bound: so that the offspring to which the one by her disobedience gave death, the other by her obedience restores to life." ||

"The Church is a virgin. Thou wilt, perhaps, ask me: If she is a virgin, how does she give birth to children? And if she does not give birth to children, how is it we gave in our names, that we might be born of her bowels? I answer: She is both virgin, and also brings forth children. She imitates Mary, who brought forth the Lord. Did not the holy Virgin Mary both bring forth, and remain a Virgin? So, too, the Church both brings forth, and is a virgin. And if thou reflectest, she gives birth to Christ, because those who are baptised are His members. *You,* says the Apostle, *are the body of Christ, and members.*¶ If, therefore, she gives birth to Christ's members, she is most like to Mary." **

"May Christ assist us, the Son of a Virgin, and the Spouse of virgins, corporally born from a virginal womb, spiritually married in virginal wedlock. Since, then, the whole universal Church is herself *espoused to one Man,* Christ, as saith the Apostle; of how great honour are His members worthy, who keep this (virginity) in their very flesh, which she, as a whole, keeps in the faith; thus imitating the Maker of their Bridegroom and their Lord? For the Church, too, is both a mother and a virgin. And of what woman's purity, in sooth, do we make any account, if she be not a virgin? Or of whom do we predicate offspring, if she be not a mother? Mary corporally gave birth to the Head of this body, the Church spiritually gives birth to the members

* *Gal.* iv. 26, 27. † *Ps.* xviii. 6. ‡ Serm. 195, al. De tempore. 12.
§ *Enchirid. ad Laurentium,* cap. 34. See *Epist.* 137 *ad Volusian.*
|| *De Symb. ad Catech. Serm.* iv. 1. See also a quotation from the same treatise, *infra,* on *The Assumption.*
¶ 1 *Cor.* xii. 27. ** *Serm.* 213, cap. 7.

of that Head. Neither in one nor the other is virginity any hindrance to fecundity. Neither in one nor the other does fecundity do away with virginity. Hence, since the Church universal is holy both in body and spirit, and yet the universal Church is not virgin in body, but in spirit: how much holier is it in those members wherein it is virgin both in body and in spirit."*

"Mary alone of women is Mother and Virgin, not only in spirit, but also in body. And Mother she is, indeed, in spirit, not of our Head, who Himself the Saviour, is He of whom rather she was herself spiritually born. For all who believe in Him, of which number she too is, are rightly called the children of the Bridegroom.† But she is clearly the spiritual Mother of His members, which we are; because she co-operated by her charity, that the faithful might be born into the Church; and these are the members of that same Head. For it was befitting that our Head should be born of a Virgin, according to the flesh, for an admirable marvel, whereby He would signify that His members were to be born of a virgin Church according to the spirit. Consequently Mary alone is Mother and Virgin both in spirit and in body—both Mother of Christ, and Virgin of Christ. But the Church, in the saints who will possess God's kingdom, is, if taken as a whole, in spirit, indeed, Christ's Mother; and, as a whole, Christ's Virgin, but not so, as a whole, in body; since in some she is Christ's Virgin; in others a mother, but not of Christ. For the faithful, whether married, or virgins consecrated to God, who are of holy living, and charity, and faith unfeigned, are, because they do the will of the Father, spiritually mothers of Christ. But corporally, the married bring forth, not Christ but Adam. And for this very reason they are eager to bring their children to the sacraments that they may be made members of Christ, since well they know in what state they brought them forth." ‡

"He could not die, except as flesh, He could not die except as a mortal body. He clothed Himself where He might die for thee. He will clothe thee where thou mayest live with Him. Where did He clothe Himself with death? In the virginity of His Mother. Where will He clothe thee with life? In the equality of His Father. Here He chose for Himself a chaste bridechamber wherein He might be united as the bridegroom with the bride. *The Word was made flesh*, that He might become the Head of the Church. For the Word Himself is not part of the Church, but took to Him flesh that He might be the Head of the Church. Somewhat of ours is already above, namely, what He received here where He died, where He was crucified. Already have certain first-fruits of thine gone before, and dost thou doubt that thou shalt follow?" §

"Let us consider who is this Virgin, so holy, that the Holy Ghost deigned to come to her; so beautiful, that God chose her for His Spouse; so fruitful, that the whole world receives of her bringing forth; so chaste, that she is virgin after childbirth. See we not under the figure of Mary the type of the holy Church? For on her too, as you know, the Holy Ghost came down; her too the power of the Most High overshadowed, and from her goes forth Christ, mighty in power. The Church is an immaculate bride, fruitful in child-bearing, virgin in chastity. She conceived not from man, but by the Spirit. She gives birth not in sorrow, but in joy. She nurtures not with

* *De Sanct. Virginit.* cap. ii. Patr. Lat. Tom. 40. † *Matt.* ix. 15.
‡ *Ibid.* cap. vi. § *Enarrat. in Ps.* cxlviii. n. 8.

breast of body, but with milk of the Teacher. Hence is she the Spouse of Christ, and Mother of the nations, who marvels at seeing herself with child, and rejoices when she has brought forth." *

S. CYRIL OF ALEXANDRIA.

"Hymning with canticles the ever-Virgin Mary, that is to say, the holy Church, and her Son and spotless Spouse. For to Him be glory for ever and ever. Amen." †

S. ISIDORE OF SEVILLE.

"Joseph typically represents Christ, whose office it is to guard the holy Church, which hath not spot nor wrinkle. But Mary signifies the Church, which being espoused to Christ, as a virgin hath conceived us of the Holy Ghost, and as a virgin hath also given us birth." ‡

* Serm. 121, *De Nat. Dom.* v. 5, Int. Opp. S. Augustini, Append. See also on *Mary and the Church*, S. Peter Chrysol. *Serm.* 146, *supra*, p. 136.

† *Hom.* iv. ad fin. ‡ *Allegoriæ ex N. Test.* Ap. Morales Lib. ii. Tr. 6.

CHAPTER VII.

INTERCESSION AND INVOCATION.

With a view to encourage the first Jewish converts S. Paul draws a contrast, in his Epistle to the Hebrews, between Mount Sinai of the Old Testament, and the mystical Sion of the New. *For you are not come*, he says, *to a mountain that might be touched, and a burning fire, and a whirlwind, and darkness, and storm, and the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words, which they that heard excused themselves, that the word might not be spoken to them. For they did not endure that which was said: "And if so much as a beast touch the mount, it shall be stoned."* And so terrible was that which was seen, Moses said: "I am frighted and tremble." But you are come to Mount Sion, and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to the company of many thousands of angels, and to the church of the first-born, who are written in the heavens, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of the just made perfect, and to Jesus the Mediator of the new testament, and to the sprinkling of blood which speaketh better than that of Abel.*†

Sinai was a material mountain of terrors, around which breathed only inexorable and unapproachable sternness. The heavenly Sion is a spiritual mountain, abounding with consolations, and of easy access. It is a mountain of intercession, where is enthroned Jesus the Mediator of the New Testament, the Head of His glorified mystical body—the Church of the first-born who are written in the heavens—composed of the company of many thousands of angels, and the spirits of the just made perfect—all united with Him in that availing mediation which He opened for us with God the Judge of all, by the shedding of His own most precious Blood.‡

That the holy angels and blessed in heaven are associated with Jesus Christ—*the One Mediator of God and man, who ever*

* *Exod.* xix. 13. † *Heb.* xii. 18-24. ‡ *Heb.* x. 19-22, ix. 14, 15.

*liveth to make intercession for us**—in praying in our behalf, hearing and offering our prayers to God, and communicating to us grace and blessings, is abundantly clear from other places of Sacred Writ.†

The early Fathers are full of this doctrine. In their vivid realisation of its truth, and confidence in the intercession of the Saints, we find them, when in prospect of martyrdom and death, promising to pray in heaven for their surviving brethren, or asking the prayers of those who should anticipate them in obtaining the eternal recompense. Thus S. Ignatius writes to the Trallians:—

"My spirit be your expiation, not now only, but when I shall have attained to God."‡

And that the holy martyr fulfilled his promise of intercession the brethren of the Church of Antioch attest in their Epistle. After describing his martyrdom they say:—

"We were eye-witnesses of these things with tears. And we passed the whole night within doors, with often bendings of the knee and prayer calling upon the Lord to strengthen us, who had been weakened by what had taken place. Having fallen asleep for a little while, some of us saw him of a sudden standing by us and embracing us, whilst others again saw the blessed Ignatius praying over us. . . . And we have made known to you the day and the time [of his martyrdom], in order that being assembled together you may communicate with the athlete and noble martyr of Christ, who trod under foot the devil, and finished, according to his Christ-loving desire, his course in Christ Jesus Our Lord."§

S. Cyprian, too, writing to Pope Cornelius who was then in exile, says:—

"Let us be mutually mindful of each other, of one heart and one mind, let us ever on either side pray for one another, by mutual love lighten our burdens and difficulties, and if one of us shall, by the speediness of the divine vouchsafement, depart hence the first, let our love continue in the presence of the Lord; let not prayer for our brethren and sisters cease in the presence of the mercy of the Father."‖

S. Justin has a remarkable passage on the worship, veneration, and honour, which the faithful in his day were wont to pay

* 1 *Tim.* ii. 5, *Heb.* vii. 25.

† See *Apoc.* i. 4, 5, v. 6-8, vi. 9-11, viii. 3, 4; *Heb.* i. 14. And that this mediation of angels and saints had place before the Incarnation of Jesus Christ, and His Ascension into heaven. See *Gen.* xix. 1, 10-13, 15-22, xlviii. 15, 16; *Zach.* i. 10-13; 2 *Mac.* xii. 12-14; *Matt.* xviii. 10; *Luke* xv. 10, xvi. 19-31.

‡ *Trall.* 13. § *Martyr. S. Ignat.* n. 7.

‖ *Ep. ad Cornel.* 57, Patr. Lat. Tom. 3, p. 836. See also *De Habit. Virg.* 24, T. 4, p. 478.

to the spirits of the Blessed in union with their adoration of the Most Holy Trinity. The words of the martyred Saint are the more noteworthy, because they are a plain and formal statement of Christian doctrine and practice contained in an apology for Christianity, written in answer to heathen calumnies. What he says is, moreover, free from all flowers of devotion or rhetoric, and, as he attests, the teaching received by tradition, and therefore Apostolic. It seems to recall, in its enumeration of the denizens of bliss, the passage of S. Paul quoted above from the Hebrews, and sounds like a gloss upon the Apostle's words.

"Hence, we have also been called atheists, and we confess that we are unbelievers (atheists) of such pretended gods, but not of the most true [God], and Father of justice and temperance, and of the other virtues, a God in whom there is no mixture of evil. Now both Him, and the Son who came from Him and taught us these things, and the host of the other good angels that follow and resemble [Him, or Them], and the prophetic Spirit, we venerate and adore (σεβόμεθα καὶ προσκυνοῦμεν), honouring in reason and truth, and ungrudgingly delivering to every one who wishes to learn even as we have been taught." *

As God was pleased to speak of old at sundry times and in divers manners to the fathers by the prophets,† so in these days of His Son's dispensation, His Holy Spirit is pleased to speak His utterances, and to breathe devotion over the face of the Church, as and when He wills,‡ according to the good pleasure of His grace. At one time His influence is made manifest in this way, at another in that. Here, it is towards some local Saint, elsewhere unknown, that the piety of all hearts is stirred up. There, it is some sacred Relic, some holy Picture of Our Lord or some Saint which seems to gather to itself the entire veneration of the faithful. Or some special Devotion, whether of more recent development, or revived from the past, awakens to new spiritual life and fervour the religious sense of the people. Thus does the Divine Householder bring forth from His heavenly treasury things new and old.§

It was the will of God in His providence over His Church, that the Christian religion should be first propagated and established by those especially, who should give their lives and endure torments even unto death in testimony of its truth, that thus the blood which they shed, might be the seed of the Church. It was likewise in accordance with the Divine Will

* *Apol.* i. n. 6.
‡ *John* iii. 8.
† *Heb.* i. 1, 2.
§ *Matt.* xiii. 52, xii. 35.

that these pre-eminent witnesses for the Faith should in those early days of the Church be held above all others in conspicuous honour amongst the faithful. Such indeed was the rank of their dignity that the title of witnesses was especially appropriated to them. Hence, they were known as *the witnesses* and called Martyrs; after Him *who gave witness* (μαρτύριον) *under Pontius Pilate, a good confession*, even Jesus Christ Himself, *who is the faithful witness* (μάρτυρ), *the first-begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth, who hath loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood.**

That was the age of martyrs; when the blood of these witnesses for Christ was as water being continually poured forth† -or of the near memory of martyrs. And we can but feebly realise how the faithful of those days, so to say, lived amongst the martyrs, whether in the catacombs, or at the sepulchres and shrines which contained their relics. Hence it was that, whilst, as S. Justin teaches, the entire court of God in heaven is worshipful, the martyrs in those first centuries seem to absorb to themselves the whole devotion and veneration of the faithful.

How universal was the veneration of Saints, and especially of martyrs, in the early Church, how enthusiastic the devotion of the people towards them, how frequent their invocation of them, and what numerous signal graces and benefits both corporal and spiritual were obtained through their intercession, is abundantly testified by the Fathers during the first six centuries, and by all that we read in their writings of the honours paid to their tombs, relics, images and pictures. Of all this we shall give many testimonies later on.

In this intercession Our Lord Jesus Christ holds a place of His own quite apart, and by its nature wholly distinct from that of all other mediators. He, as the Divine Incarnate Word, is alone Mediator by right of justice; and in this sense, according to the Apostle's words, *there is but one only Mediator of God and man, the Man Christ Jesus who gave Himself a redemption for all.*‡ He is moreover the Head of His mystical body, in and through Whom, all His members live and have vital force to act. All other mediation whatsoever, whether of the blessed in heaven, or of the just on earth, is not of justice, but of pure grace, and of availing efficacy only through Jesus Christ, and in union with His

* 1 *Tim.* vi. 13, *Apoc.* i. 5. † *Ps.* lxxxviii. 3. ‡ 1 *Tim.* ii. 56.

mediation. So far from detracting aught from the mediation of Jesus Christ, it redounds to the exceeding glory and praise thereof, being in truth His own—the overflow of the superabounding fulness of His own all-availing intercession to the members of His mystical body, through the communion of Saints.

S. Paul makes use of the comparison of the harmony that exists between the members of the natural body, to show the union and charity there should always be amongst the members here on earth of Christ's mystical body which is animated by one Divine Spirit. But this charity is perfected in His glorified members. There, is no jealous rivalry to mar the union of the Saints in bliss. There as here, *God has set the members every one of them in the body as it hath pleased Him.** One is higher in glory than another: *One is the glory of the sun, another of the moon, and another the glory of the stars. For star differeth from star in glory.*† One receives more accidental glory—is more honoured in the Church on earth—than another. But they do not envy one another on this account. *If one member glory, all the members rejoice with it.*‡ Jesus Christ is not jealous of the homage that is paid to His Saints, or that they are invoked to obtain favours from Him. He is the Head of the body whereof they are the members. They are in Him, and He in them. Hence He rejoices in their glory, as they rejoice in His: for He is glorified in them and they in Him.§ And all the honour that we render to the Saints as His members He counts as done to Himself.

In the mystical body of Christ the Blessed Virgin holds a place amongst the other Saints of unique and transcendent dignity, as the Mother of Jesus Christ its Head, and as being most intimately associated with her Divine Son in the mystery of His Incarnation, and the work of human redemption; and also as being the Mother of the redeemed, His own brethren by adoption. Hence because Mary is the most excellent member of Christ's Church, she has functions more noble therein than those of any other, and bears a relation to the whole mystical body, and to all its several members, of an order quite distinct from the rest: sharing, as she does, from her closer union with the Head, more abundantly and directly His influence, which is thus communicated to all the other members.‖

* 1 *Cor.* xii. 18. † *Ib.* xv. 41. ‡ *Ib.* xii. 26.
§ 2 *Thess.* i. 10, 12, *Philip.* i. 20, *Ps.* cl. 1, 2, lxviii. 36. ‖ *Col.* ii. 19.

Since, then, of the mystical body Jesus Christ is the Head, amongst the members Mary is likened to the neck. Or to use another analogy of the Apostle's: If amongst the celestial luminaries, in relation to the earth, Jesus Christ is the sun, as being the source of light, heat, and life; and if the saints are as the stars differing in their brightness; Mary is the moon, which most nearly reflects the splendour of the sun, and lends light and influence to the earth, more than all the stars together.

But as the Blessed Virgin's rank amongst the glorified members of Christ's mystical body is peerless and unique, so also is the part she holds amongst them in intercession, or the mediation of grace.

This twofold pre-eminence of Our Lady in dignity, and intercession is continually witnessed to by the Fathers, and notably assigned to her in some of their very earliest writings. Thus S. Justin, S. Irenæus, and Tertullian—following up S. Paul's comparison of Jesus Christ our Redeemer with our first father Adam who caused our fall—unite in drawing a like comparison between the Blessed Virgin and our first mother Eve who co-operated to our fall.* In this way they parallel by contrast Jesus and Mary with Adam and Eve. What the two latter are to fallen mankind, the former are to the redeemed mystical body. But as the place of Eve is altogether solitary—for in her, after Adam, the whole human race is summed up—so in like manner, after Christ the Redeemer, the place of Mary in His glorified mystical body is highest and unique. S. Irenæus emphatically calls Mary the advocate of Eve, and thereby implies the specially representative character of Our Lady's intercession. Being the advocate of Eve, she is the advocate of all; since Eve, as mother of all, represents in herself all her children.

"Mary was persuaded to obey God, that the Virgin Mary might become the advocate of the virgin Eve. And as the human race was bound to death through a virgin, it is saved through a Virgin; the scales being equally balanced—virginal disobedience by virginal obedience." †

It may be, that much less in bulk is to be found in the earlier Fathers that bears directly on the intercession of Our Blessed Lady, and invocation of her, than on that of the Martyrs and other Saints. The same may be said also with regard to the intercession of Jesus Christ Himself, and prayer to Him. We should, however, remark, that not always those matters which

* See *supra*, pp. 35-38.

† *Hær.* v. 19.

are intrinsically of greater importance are alluded to most frequently, and treated of at most length, but such as at the time happen to come into more prominent view. And this was the case, as we have said, with devotion to the Martyrs in the first centuries of the Church. Not but that in several of the Fathers much may be found on the intercession of Our Blessed Lady and devotion to her. Moreover, what is said by them points to her intercession as being quite distinct in character, and holding a place apart from that of other Saints; as will appear in the passages which we shall cite from them.

Amongst our quotations we give some which illustrate the practical devotion of the faithful in early times to the Martyrs and other Saints; because this forms an argument *a fortiori* for devotion to the Blessed Virgin: since if honour is due, and invocation may be made, to any of the Blessed, it would assuredly be to her who is the holy Mother of our Divine Saviour, the King of all Saints.

Non-Catholics frequently make a great distinction between what belongs doctrinally to the intercession of the Saints, and the practice of invoking them. Many will admit the truth of their intercession, and dwell largely on its excellence and beauty. Some, too, consider it right to ask Our Lord to hear the prayers of His Saints in their behalf, and to grant them favours through their intercession; and will moreover offer up to God the intercession of the Saints in general, or of some Saint in particular. But they hold it unlawful to invoke the Saints directly, to supplicate their help, and ask favours from them. Thus they would consider it allowable to say: "May Mary pray for me," "May Mary help me," but unlawful to say, "Mary, pray for me," "Mary, help me."

Such a distinction, however, has no place in the Fathers of the early Church. It is true, that before the fourth century very few examples of direct invocation occur in their writings, whilst there is frequent mention of the power of the Saints' intercession; and the lawfulness of invoking them is witnessed to. But the same might be said with regard to direct and express prayers to Our Lord Jesus Christ, and with greater force as to any invocation of the Holy Ghost. We give many instances of direct invocation of the Blessed Virgin and the Saints from the patristic writings of the fourth and two following centuries both in the East and West. Had there been any difference in principle between direct invocation, and what obtains amongst Anglicans

as *comprecation*,* the Fathers would hardly have failed to refer to it. As it is, they sanction both of them indiscriminately, as well by their own practice, as in teaching and exhorting the faithful.

Veneration and invocation of Angels and Saints may, no doubt, like every other Christian doctrine and practice be liable to abuse; and we can well understand that it might not be expedient to set such cultus prominently forward, and in all its fulness, at certain times or under all circumstances, nor until Christians were solidly grounded in the principles of the Faith. This may to some extent account for the less frequent mention of direct invocation in the earlier Fathers. S. Paul seems to refer to such abuse in his warning to the Colossian converts: *Let no man seduce you in religion of angels, . . . not holding the Head*, etc.† Here the Apostle indicates what alone will safeguard the cultus of Saints in its purity, and keep it within the due *proportion of the faith*,‡ *viz.*, "holding the Head." That is to say, unless the whole teaching of the Incarnation is held and realised in all its truth and fulness, any worship of angels and saints is sure to lead to doctrinal and practical abuse. Hence, taking everything into account, we consider it to be a clear gain to Protestantism, that in all its various forms, the cultus of Saints is discountenanced, and their invocation forbidden,§ since such practice without the safeguards of the Church's infallible teaching and authority, if left to private judgment, would surely degenerate into a depraved creature-worship.

That no invocation of Saints can be lawful, or of any avail, apart from the intercession of Jesus Christ, and independently of the will and power of God, is, of course, a first principle of the faith, and is implied in that supreme adoration (latria) which we render to God alone; whereby we profess our entire and absolute dependence on Him alone for the supply of all our needs; and our only plea for receiving aught at His hands to be, the infinite

* We are ignorant as to whether this term, in frequent use amongst Anglican writers of late, is to be met with in Catholic theology.

† *Col.* ii. 18, 19.

‡ *Rom.* xii. 6. See S. Augustine, *Serm.* 285, n. 5, amongst the quotations, *infra*.

§ See the 22d of the Anglican XXXIX Articles, in which, together with Purgatory, Indulgences, worship and veneration of Images and Relics, the Roman doctrine of the Invocation of Saints is denounced, "as a fond thing vainly invented, not founded on any warrant of Scripture, but rather repugnant to the Word of God."

merits of Our Lord Jesus Christ; and that whatever honour we give to creatures, be they ever so exalted, or confidence we repose in them, is all to be ultimately referred to God alone, as the sole Last End of all creatures, and the one only source of all good, of which they are but means and instruments according to His will and pleasure.

What Cardinal Newman wrote about the Blessed Virgin applies to the Saints in general:—

"Her presence is above, not on earth: her office is external, not within us . . . her power is indirect. It is her prayers that avail, and they are effectual by the *fiat* of Him who is our all in all. Nor does she hear us by any innate power or by any personal gift; but by His manifestation to her of the prayers which we make to her. When Moses was on the Mount, the Almighty told him of the idolatry of his people at the foot of it, in order that he might intercede for them; and thus, it is the Divine Presence which is the intermediating Power by which we reach her, and she reaches us." *

Several of the Fathers speak very strongly against abuse and false exaggerations in venerating the Saints. We should note, however, at the same time, that the strongest passages in this respect are found in the writings of those very Fathers who say the greatest things in praise of the Saints, and most frequently exhort the faithful to show them honour. Thus S. Augustine says that sometimes an excess of honour is paid to the Saints, and that many things have been usurped from what belongs to God alone, and given to them. We have a notable instance of this in the honours paid to the Blessed Virgin by the sect of Collyridians whom S. Epiphanius proscribes.

The Fathers frequently insist, that in honouring the Saints, we honour God; and that in our devotion to them we must not forget Him, for that they are wholly dependent on Him for hearing our prayers and granting us benefits. They urge moreover, that whilst we are devout to the Saints, we must endeavour to imitate them by bringing forth fruits of virtue after their example, and that unless this is our aim, our devotion to them will be profitless, and unacceptable both to God and to His Saints.

Before closing these prefatory remarks on the cultus of Our Blessed Lady during the first six centuries—for its more precise statement and actual proofs must be gathered from the passages of the Fathers which we append—it should be observed, that from their writings generally we can learn but little of the everyday

* *Letter to Dr. Pusey*, p. 89.

popular devotion as practised by the faithful, towards the Saints and the Blessed Virgin in particular. Their works do not lend to such details. They are for the most part formal treatises on doctrines of the faith, or were directed against certain prevalent heresies. Or they are set sermons and orations, composed, so to say, for great state occasions. In patristic writings now extant Christianity is set forth in its leading principles and broad doctrinal lines, but not drawn out in its more ordinary practical effects on the people.

Here and there we find in their works, but as though quite incidentally, mention made of the people's enthusiastic devotion to the Saints, their fervent invocation of them, and of miracles wrought, and graces obtained through their intercession. But for the most part the record of these is called forth on the occasion of some extraordinary event, such as the discovery of the sacred bodies of SS. Gervasius and Protasius at Milan, or of the holy relics of S. Stephen. Thus in his *City of God* S. Augustine is led to narrate a great number of miracles the truth of which he vouches for. But such occasions are rare.

The whole life of S. Paulinus—as portrayed in his Epistles and Poems—discloses to us more on the subject of popular devotion to the Saints than we can perhaps find elsewhere at that period.

Again, the continual concourse of pilgrims visiting the tomb of S. Thecla at Seleucia, their fervent devotion, the numerous miracles and graces obtained through her intercession—all this, as described by S. Basil the bishop of that city in his Life of the Saint, reads like the account of our modern Lourdes.

But it is not until the time of S. Gregory of Tours, of S. Fortunatus, of S. Gregory the Great, and John Moschus, in the latter part of the sixth century that we seem to gain any real insight into the devotion of ordinary men and women to the Saints, and to the Blessed Virgin in particular—for what is recorded by earlier Fathers on this matter has chiefly relation to the Martyrs. As the examples given by the above-mentioned writers are many, and wear the more familiar character of anecdotes, we shall collect them together in a separate Chapter.

We here conclude with a quotation that bears upon our subject:—

"So far from the occurrence of a statement that prayer ought to be addressed to Our Lady in a document of the fifth century being a ground for suspicion of interpolation, it is precisely what

would be expected. Already, long before that time, she had been invoked, whether rhetorically or not, by S. Hippolytus in a sermon preached at Rome.* Already had S. Ephrem supplicated God to hear him through her prayers. . . . That out of the two facts of the direct invocation of her name in sermons, and the use of her prayers, a direct appeal to herself to intercede for us should arise, was inevitable. And such we find to be the fact. Theodotus of Ancyra publicly called on Our Lady at Ephesus, and broke out into the invocation :—

"'O Virgin, a greater Paradise than Eden.' At the same time, he affirms as a fact that he and Christians pray to her. 'Hail, name of Mary breathing sweetness. . . . Such wonders is the divine Virgin Mother ever bringing to us in her holy illuminations. With her is the Fount of Life, and breasts of spiritual and guileless milk, from which we now eagerly rush to suck sweetness, not forgetting the past, but also longing for future favours.'†

"Who ever more clearly called Mary channel of grace and Mother of Christians? This was in the fifth century. At the end of the same, and the very beginning of the next century, S. Fulgentius exhorts all Christians to invoke her.

"'Come virgins to a Virgin, come ye who conceive to one who conceived, ye who bear to one who bore, mothers to a Mother, young women to the Young.'

"In the beginning of the sixth century instances come thick upon us. Hermits in the desert and courtiers in the palace invoke her. Anchorets in the wilderness kneel and burn lamps before her image. Of Narses, the conqueror of Italy, it is said :—

"'Those who knew him well, say how he adored the Deity, with supplications and other acts of piety, and how he honoured the Virgin Mother of God, that she might openly show him the moment when he should offer battle.'‡

"That in the sixth century, three hundred years before what in Anglican cant is called the division of the East and West, Christians invoked Our Lady in the same way as they do now, is as indisputable a fact as that William the Conqueror won the battle of Hastings. With this fact staring us in the face, what possible reason is there to suspect interpolation when we meet with invocations to Mary in a document of that period?" §

* Galland. ii. 496.

† There is some difference of opinion as to the Author. The period at which it was written is plainly the time of S. Cyril's reconciliation with the Antiochenes. Compare the doctrine of the Homily with that of S. Cyril's letter to Acacius. We may note that a great increase of devotion to Our Blessed Lady and of her cultus took place in the Church, and especially amongst the Monks, after the Council of Ephesus and the condemnation of Nestorius.

‡ Evagrius, *Eccl. Hist.* vi. 24.

§ *Dublin Review*, April 1868, p. 355.

ACTS OF MARTYRS.

"We therefore announce to you, brethren and dearest children, what we have ourselves heard and have touched with our hands; that both you who were present may be reminded of the glory of the Lord, and you too who now learn it by hearing of it from us, may have communion with the holy martyrs, and through them with Our Lord Jesus Christ: to whom is glory and honour world without end. Amen." *

"If we venerate with due admiration the most blessed Passions of those who, far from our own homes, have been hallowed by a happy martyrdom, . . . and if we honour with vigils, hymns, and the sacraments those days on which . . . they were crowned; in order that by praying we may seek to obtain, and by honouring them merit, their patronages and suffrages in the sight of the Lord; with what solemnity shall we venerate this holy day, on which the blessed Saturninus, bishop of the city of Toulouse and Martyr, merited, by the bounty of God, in this city, etc. . . . Let us not neglect the friends of God and the beloved of God, as though dead, but let us honour them as living; because it is a thing certain and of undoubted faith, that if we confidently implore their suffrages, we shall happily feel their patronages. For even if the solicitude of these saints were to cease, still He would bestow the things desired . . . Who, when petitioned in His own, knows that He is Himself honoured." †

A matron in Sapor's persecution A.D. 344, thus addresses the Martyrs before suffering:—

"Ye are magnifying Him with your blood: but I have one request to make to you: do it for me: it is that ye would beseech your Lord whom ye have loved, and for whom ye are being sacrificed, that He would count me worthy in that day of seeing you, and entering into your place, and being settled near to your abode, because I know that I am a sinful woman, and I believe that if ye request it of my Lord, He will forgive my sins." ‡

CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA.

"The Gnostic [that is, the spiritual man, a perfect Christian] prays also together with angels, as being already the equal of angels; nor is he ever out of their holy guardianship. Even though he should pray alone, yet has he the choir of angels standing by." §

ORIGEN.

"Not only the great High-priest (Jesus Christ) prays with such as pray sincerely, but the angels also, who rejoice in heaven more over one repentant

* *The Passion of the holy Martyrs Perpetua and Felicitas* A.D. 203, P. L. Tom. 3, p. 16.

† *The Acts of S. Saturninus*, composed towards the close of the third century. Ruinart, pp. 109-113.

‡ *Acta Mart.* i. p. 107. The same devotion to the Martyrs is seen long after in the contemporary Acts of S. Simeon Stylites, Assem. *Cal. Lit.* vol. i. pp. 218, 219.

§ *Stromata*, L. vii. c. xii.

sinner than over ninety and nine just that need not penance,* as well as the spirits of the saints who have already fallen asleep. . . . For—since knowledge in the present life is disclosed to those who are worthy through a glass and in a dark manner, but then face to face†—it would be unreasonable not to infer the same by analogy with regard to the other virtues also; especially as all that is laid up in store beforehand will be then brought to its true perfection. Now the divine word teaches us that one of the principal virtues is charity towards our neighbour; and this, we cannot but believe, is felt more strongly by the saints departed towards such as are combating in this life, than by those still encompassed with human infirmity, and themselves struggling together with the others who need assistance. For not here on earth only, in those who love the brethren is that saying fulfilled: *If one member suffer, all the members suffer with it, and if one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it;*‡ since it belongs to the charity of those also who are out of this life, to say: *The care of all the Churches: Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is scandalised, and I am not on fire?*§ . . . How many angels, may we not believe, ministering to Jesus—who desires to gather the children of Israel one by one, and congregate those who are dispersed, and saves those that fear and call upon Him—labour with Him, more than apostles do, for the increase and enlargement of the Church: whence some of the angels are called by John presidents of the Churches. Verily, not without effect do *the angels of God ascend and descend upon the Son of Man:*|| since—conspicuous by their eyes illumined with the light of knowledge, and during the actual time of prayer reminded by Him who is supplicated of what things the suppliant stands in need—they effect what they are able, as having received a general commission. . . . Wherefore He who has numbered all the hairs on the heads of His saints, will bring seasonably to the spot at the time of prayer, one who will be to the suppliant a minister of His beneficence, listening attentively to him who prays with faith. . . . Yea, the angel of each one, even of the little ones in the Church, both prays with us, and acts with us in the things about which we pray, as far as is possible." ¶

"Consequently, it is not unfitting to offer up supplication, intercession, and thanksgiving to the saints; and two of these—I mean, intercession and thanksgiving—not to the saints only, but also to men [still in this life]; but supplication to saints only—*v.g.*, a Peter or Paul; that they may aid us and make us worthy to avail ourselves of the power bestowed on them for the remission of our sins. The case, indeed, may happen of one who is not a saint, but of some one we have injured; and we may be allowed, on becoming sensible of the offence we have done him, to supplicate him to forgive us the injury of which we have been guilty. Now if these acts are to be rendered to holy men, how much more should thanksgiving be made to Christ, Who, by the will of the Father, has benefited us so greatly.

"Still if we understood in truth what prayer sometimes is, no prayer would be offered up to aught begotten, not even to Christ Himself: but to the One Only God and Father of all things, to Whom also the Saviour Himself prayed, as we have before said, and to Whom He teaches us to pray." **

* *Luke* xv. 7. † 1 *Cor.* xiii. 12. ‡ 1 *Cor.* xii. 26. § 2 *Cor.* xi. 29.
|| *John* i. 51. ¶ *De Oratione*, n. xi. ** *Ib.* n. xiv.

"We must pray to God alone, who is over all things. We must pray also to the Only-begotten and First-born of every creature, the Word of God; and Him we must implore as our High-priest to carry our prayer, that comes first to Him, to His God and our God, to His Father and the Father of those who live agreeably to the Word of God." *

"The One God—the God who is our all—is to be propitiated by us and to be appeased by prayer, even that God who is rendered favourable by piety and all virtue. But if he (Celsus) is desirous, after the Supreme God, to propitiate some others also, let him bear in mind, that just as a body in motion is accompanied by the movement of its shadow; so, too, by rendering the Supreme God propitious, we have, as a consequence, all His friends, angels, souls, spirits, propitious also; for they sympathise with those who are worthy of God's favours. And not only do they become kindly affected towards the worthy, but co-operate also with those who desire to worship the Supreme God, and propitiate Him, praying together with us and supplicating with us. We are therefore bold to affirm, that in union with such as on principle prefer the better part and pray to God, ten thousands of holy powers join in prayer unasked (ἄκλητοι)." †

"As they who, according to the Law of Moses, stood at the altar, seemed through the blood of oxen and goats to minister remission of sins, so the spirits of those who for the testimony of Jesus, have been smitten with the sword, stand not in vain at the altar in the heavens, ministering to those who pray, remission of sins." ‡

"Since all the saints, departed this life, still preserve their charity towards those who are in this world, there is no impropriety in saying that they take care of the salvation of those on earth, and aid them by their prayers. For it is written in the Book of Maccabees: *This is Jeremias the prophet of God, who always prays for the people.*" §

"Come, O Angel, receive him who by the word has been converted from former error, from the doctrine of demons, and iniquity that speaketh on high; and receiving him, as a good physician cherish and instruct him. He is a little one, to-day is he born—an old man once more become a youth. Receive him, bestowing on him the baptism of the second regeneration. Call unto thee also the other associates of thy ministry, that altogether ye may instruct unto faith those who once were deceived: since *there is greater joy in heaven over one sinner that doth penance, than over ninety and nine just who need not penance.*" ||

S. CYPRIAN.

"There a great number of beloved ones expect us, parents, brothers, children—a vast and mighty throng—are longing for us, themselves now secure of their own safety, and still solicitous for our salvation." ¶

EUSEBIUS OF CÆSAREA.

"It is our custom to go to the tombs of God's beloved ones, there to offer

* *Contr. Celsum.* viii. 26. See also iv., viii. 17.
† *Ibid.* viii. 64. See also 34. ‡ *Exhortat. ad Martyres,* n. 30.
§ *In Cant.* L. iii., ii. 5. || *Luke* xv. 7. Hom. i. *In Ezech.* n. 8.
¶ *De Mortalitate,* n. 26, P. L. T. 4, p. 624.

up our prayers beside them, and to honour their blessed souls. And these things are laudably practised by us." *

S. HILARY OF POITIERS.

"In truth neither guards of saints, nor fortresses of angels fail to stand by such as will them. . . . And should we deem as light the protection we have in the apostles, patriarchs, and prophets, or rather in the angels who as a body-guard hedge round the Church, it is added: *And the Lord is round about His people from this time forth for evermore.*" †

S. BASIL.

"Of the holy spiritual powers that have their places in heaven, some are called eyes, from their being charged to watch over us; others ears, from their receiving our prayers." ‡

S. GREGORY NAZIANZEN.

"Mayest thou, Cyprian, look down propitiously from on high upon us, and guide our word and life. Shepherd too, as shepherd together with me, this holy flock; amongst other things leading it on to what is best, and driving away the fierce wolves, and the hunters after syllables and words; and gladdening us with a more perfect and clear illumination of the Holy Trinity, before whom thou standest, whom we adore and glorify, and for whom together we combat," etc.§

"The martyr is with the martyrs: now indeed in heaven, and there, I think, offering up sacrifices for us, and praying for the people. For though he has left us, yet has he not utterly abandoned us. . . . And mayest thou, Basil, O divine and sacred head, look down from on high upon us; and that sting of the flesh which God has given us for our discipline, do thou by thy intercessions remove, or induce us to bear it with greater fortitude. Mayest thou guide us in all our conduct to what is most becoming; and when we depart hence, do thou receive us there also into thy tabernacles." ||

"Ye neighbouring Martyrs be propitious, and receive to your bosoms the progeny of Gregory and the renowned Nonna, with those also who are gathered together and united in the sacred tombs." ¶

"Ofttimes hast thou saved me from sickness . . . because thou hadst

* *Præp. Evang.* L. xiii. c. 11.

† *In Ps.* cxxiv. Patr. Lat. Tom. 9, p. 682.

‡ *Hom. in Ps.* xxxiii. n. 11.

§ *Orat. in laud. S. Cypriani*, P. Gr. Tom. 35, p. 1193. This sermon was preached by S. Gregory in the Cathedral of Constantinople, most probably in the month of October, 379. The S. Cyprian here is not the holy Bishop of Carthage, but the martyr of Antioch who suffered at Nicomedia together with the Virgin Justina, under Diocletian and Maximian, A.D. 304. See the Roman Breviary, Sept. 26. For S. Justina's invocation of Our Lady, see the next Chapter, *infra.*

|| *Orat. in laud. S. Basil.* Tom. 36, pp. 601-5. See a like prayer to S. Athanasius at the close of S. Gregory's sermon on that Saint. *Ib.* p. 1128.

¶ *Carm.* L. i. § ii., Tom. 38, p. 20.

God propitious to thee. Ah, then, save me now also, O my father (Gregory) by thy mighty prayers; and thou too, my blessed mother (Nonna), who didst die in the midst of joyous supplications (or vows, εὐχωλῇσι)." *

S. EPHREM.

"Be you intercessors for me. My petitions are not more weighty or heavy, than is your blood, that they should fail to be offered by you. God makes not account of aught with you, because you made account of nothing with Him."

"Help me in secret, that with public encomium I may adorn you. . . . For without you I am unable to speak of you. On your feast will I sing your praises to your brethren: give me of your wine, that I may delight your beloved ones." †

Hymn xv., On the Holy Martyrs.

"*Respons.* Glory to Him who has multiplied your victories. Glory to Him who magnifies your commemorations.

"1. In the joy of your solemnities will I sing His praises who has multiplied your triumphs, and from your relics (bones) will I sing a guerdon. Because of your succours the treasury is opened.

"2. At the time of diseases and wounds it behoves to call in physicians, that they may bring remedies for ulcers and heal the wounded.

"3. Strong men and good-hearted you are. Arise and repair the ruins of our injured ones. Because we have come back wounded from the Assyrians, let us apply your relics (bones) to our wounds.

"4. Jesus, the Leader of the army of all the slain (Martyrs), has ranged you in order in our country. Be ye to us towering citadels, that through you we may withstand the threatening robbers from among the Assyrians.

"5. Ye illustrious Martyrs, friends of the Son, rise up to the help of our Mother the Church. For behold, tribulations and sorrows of all sorts compass her about on every side.

"6. Lo, on one side alarming rumours, and on the other terrible tidings: lo, on one side woes and slaughter, and on the other rout and captivity.

"7. Be ye to us who have confidence in your relics, a wall outside our wall, a mighty stronghold that cannot be destroyed. Be walled fortresses whereto we may fly for refuge." ‡

"Give us joy, O Lord, when the just shall enter into Thy presence. Reject us not from them; but make us to be amongst them when they shall rise again, when they shall show each one to Thee their work, and their gain by trading, and their labour with riches. . . ."

Then after commemorating many martyrs, anchorets, etc., Saints of the Old Testament, the twelve Apostles and the

* *Carm.* 81, *Ib.* p. 53.

† *Hymn.* vii. nn. 16, 19, 20, *De SS. Mart.* Lamy, vol. iii. p. 701.

‡ *Ib.* S. Ephrem's Hymns *On Confessors and Martyrs*, as well as those that follow in the same volume, *On Abraham Hidunaia*, *On Julian Saba*, and *On the 40 Martyrs of Sebaste*, abound with passages of invocation of these Saints, and confidence in their power, and willingness to help their suppliants.

Evangelists, the holy Doctor says at last, as though to crown all the rest:—

"And Mary the Mother of Christ who brought forth the Immaculate Fruit. May our souls be preserved from ills by her prayers. Thanks be to the Hidden Father who sent His word to the Virgin, and formed in her a body pure by the Living and Holy Spirit."

He then prays that the Incarnate Word may bless with all benediction spiritual and temporal, the just, and repentant sinners, adding:—

"May He grant rest to our departed who have died in faith, that with Abraham and Isaac they may have joy in the holy bosom." *

S. Ephrem clearly shows that the souls of the Saints on their release from their bodies have the use of reason, and are most intimately united to God. For he teaches that the Saints, and in particular the Blessed Virgin,† are to be invoked by the faithful; and that at once from the time of their death they intercede with God for men, and help them by their prayers.‡

"Here I call upon you, most invincible Martyrs, who fought so valiantly, and have triumphed over so many persecutions and afflictions wherein you contested, that for us you supplicate the pity of Christ, who never desires to see us spoiled and bereft of His mercy." §

"We offer to Thee, O Lord, together with the odour of sweetness the merits of the most blessed Virgin Mary." ||

"Farewell thou too, O Lady Mother of God, who prayed much for us that we might be saved." ¶

"O Virgin Mother of God, Gate of heaven, and Ark, in thee I have a secure salvation. Save me out of thy pure mercy (δωρεὰν, gratis), O Lady." **

"Visit thy Church, O father,†† with thy prayers that are heard, and pray for it, as did Moses, that it may have a priest such as Josue Though David had departed of a long season, and was not in Ezechias' days, yet his prayer defended and delivered Jerusalem from Sennacherib." ‡‡

"Come, then, to my aid, ye Saints, by your intercessions, and you beloved, by your holy prayers, that Christ, by His grace, may move my tongue to speak . . . and you to eager and attentive hearing," etc.§§

"*O woman great is thy faith.* Great indeed, I say, and glorious art thou. . . . The Lord hath sworn in His goodness, 'On account of this deed which

* *Sedra de justis*, Serm. iv. *Ib.* pp. 231-238.

† Amongst other places—*Opp. Syr.* Tom. iii. pp. 481 a, 487 f, 532 a.

‡ iii. 227 b, e, 231 f, 234 d, e, 236 b, 250 f, 254 a, 255 d, 259 a, b, f, 269 d, 273 e, d, 509 f, 340 d, 345 e, 354 f, 355 a, 357 d, *Necrosima.* See also *supra*, pp. 139, 140, 153-157, 213, 225, 6.

§ *Parœnesis* liv. Opp. Syr. Tom. iii. p. 529. || lxi. *Ib.* p. 532.

¶ *Ib.* ** *Precat.* ix. Opp. Gr. et Lat. Tom. iii. p. 522.

†† S. Ephrem is invoking a deceased bishop.

‡‡ *Is.* xxxvii. 35. *Necrosima* i., Opp. Syr. vol. iii. p. 227.

§§ *Encom. in SS. XL Martyres*, Opp. Gr. et Lat. Tom. ii. p. 341.

thou hast done for My sake, I will admit thee, enrolled in the choir of angels, to My rest.' Wherefore I beg of thee, O holy, faithful and blessed one, pray for me to the Saints, saying: 'Intercede, O triumphant champions of Christ, for Ephrem, the least of all, and most miserable,' that I may find mercy, and be saved by the grace of Christ. For to Him belong glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen." *

"Hail, Luke; for thou it was who hast been interpreter to us of the descent of Gabriel; thou it was who didst adorn the Virgin full of grace, crowning her in virginal wise, and then conducting her with regal rite to the espousals of the Spirit. Thou it was who hast made known the exultations of Elisabeth. Thou enduredst not to be silent on the circumcision of the flesh of Christ, that thus thou mightest show that He suffered all things in our flesh, and, Himself made flesh, underwent them for our sake." †

Speaking of the censers of Core and his company, S. Ephrem says:—

"If the censers of them that provoked God were sanctified by the men themselves, and became plates before the altar; how much more, in the case of Confessors, would their bodies be sanctified before their souls." ‡

"The prophet made a great lamentation over his brother, and over his yoke-fellow.§ He buried him, and made him a refuge, and delivered himself from slaughter. Let every man see to it, how he is to rescue himself from wrath. A great wall were the bones of Joseph to the camp.‖ May the sacred office that thou didst hold be a wall to our place. To cities and to towns, walls are made for preservation: and the assemblies of Christ do priests keep sacredly. Since thy voice hath ceased from our congregation, may thy benedictions to us-ward be multiplied. Since the sight of thee hath departed from us, may thy name get itself glory amongst us. Since thou hast left us orphans, O father, may thy prayer be a mother to us. May the glorious Trinity be a wall to our souls." ¶

"The soul that lives in God is able to give others life: and a testimony of this is—if thou wilt hearken in an enlightened way—Eliseus, who himself brought to life two dead bodies, one whilst he was yet on earth, and the other after he departed. His soul was living in God, and it gave the body life: and after it went forth from it, it gave life to others. From God did the prophet's soul gain life, and after it went forth from him, he quickened those dead like himself. Lo, there is life in the Martyrs' bones, for who will assert that they live not? Behold the living monuments, and who would doubt of this? They are fortified strongholds that rescue from robbers, they are cities strong that protect from capturers: towers high and very strong for any one who fleeth to them, which from murderers will rescue; and death to them approacheth not. He that is with envy vanquished, or with fraud, that soul-destroying venom, help shall take from these; that the poison may be stopped, nor have injured him a whit. Let him that hath oppressed ask, that he may

* *Encom. in SS. XL Martyres*, p. 355.
† *Encom. in Petr. et Paul.* Opp. Gr. et Lat. Tom. iii. p. 465.
‡ *Opp. Syr.* vol. i. p. 260 f. § 1 *Kings* xiii. 26, 29.
‖ *Exod.* xiii. 19, *Jos.* xxiv. 32.
¶ Opp. Syr. iii. p. 234 c. See also p. 250 f, 583 c. Morris, p. 229.

oppress no more; the stealer ask no more to steal; him from whom love is far removed, and who against his brother swells with wrath, from these in prayer demand peace, to be reconciled to him. Let him to whom hath entered in the demon of adultery, enkindling in him foul desire, with oil wherewith their lights are kindled,* anoint himself—forth will it come. Physicians are they that are strenuous after health, with life-drugs laden, healing for the soul and body, a healing spiritual, alike for soul and body yielding health. Faith of thee do they require, and all thou askest will they give, if untorn by doubt thy mind. If thou art dead, thou shalt be quick. God is dwelling in their bones, and by Him it is they do all mighty works. Be praise to Thee, and upon us Thy mercies be, Thou God that dwellest in the just." †

"I beseech Thee, O Lord, in mercy for their sakes, give me a little breath of wisdom, not that I may glory in it, but that I may be holpen by it." ‡

"We adjure you then, O most holy Martyrs, who, for our God and Saviour and for love of Him, freely and promptly underwent most atrocious torments, and for this cause too are now more closely united to Him, that for us, miserable sinners beset with the filth of sloth, ye will beseech the Lord to pour upon us the grace of Christ to brighten and illumine our hearts, so that we may be able to love Him. . . . Now therefore, O Saints, even for me a sinner who am falling asleep at the very time of God's so great beneficence, intercede with your prayers, that at that tremendous hour when the secrets of men shall be made manifest, I may obtain mercy. O most holy martyrs of Christ, to-day I am for you like some poor useless, unhandy cup-bearer; since of the wine of your glorious conflict I have given to drink to your sons and brethren in the faith; and from the goodly table of your triumph, laden with all sorts of dainty meats and sumptuous food, I have striven with my whole soul's affection and desire to recreate your fathers, brothers, kinsfolk and friends, who daily frequent this feast. And, lo, they sing psalms, with exultation and jubilee glorifying God, who on account of your virtues has adorned your most sacred heads with crowns; and with exceeding joy they gather round the holy relics of your combat, eager to obtain a blessing, and desiring to take with them sacred remedies for soul and body. To all, therefore, impart your benediction, as good disciples of the best of masters. I too, how poor and weak soever I be, having received strength from you, with entire devotion of soul have sung aloud before your holy relics the hymn of your praise and glory. Wherefore, I beseech you, intercede in my behalf, vile and miserable though I be, before the throne of the Divine Majesty, that by your prayers I may deserve to obtain salvation, through the grace of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, to whom be glory, and to the Father, and the Holy Ghost for ever. Amen." §

"I pray to thee, O father, succour the Church by thy prayers." |

"O inviolate, unspotted, all-pure and chaste Virgin Mother of God, Mary, Queen of all, hope of the despairing, our most glorious Lady, the best and

* That is, the lamps that were kept burning before their shrines.

† *Opp. Syr.* vol. ii. p. 349 e, Morris, p. 229.

‡ The Saint is speaking of the holy Martyrs. Morris, p. 230.

§ *Encomium in Martyres*, Opp. Gr. et Lat. Tom. iii. p. 253.

| See *Can.* ii., vii., viii., xiv., xv., xvi., *Paræn.* xlvii.

most excelling, higher than the heavens, more shining than the rays and splendours of the sun, more to be honoured than the cherubim, more clear-sighted than the many-eyed bright spirits, more holy than the seraphim, and incomparably more glorious than all the rest of the heavenly hosts. Thou only hope of the fathers, glory of the prophets, renown of the apostles, honour of the martyrs, joy of the saints, and light of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, for excellence most approved; glory of Aaron, splendour of Moses, and fleece of Gideon. Concentration (cœtus) of the hierarchies, crown of all saints and virgins, unapproached for thy exceeding brightness and splendour, censer of gold, lamp most bright, urn most beautiful containing the heavenly manna; table bearing the written law for men, true ark, book of writing most divine, princess, of all most prudent and wise, light-giving Virgin, most holy consoler and directress of all, most sacred Maid. . . .* Those keys of the Eastern gate that was always kept shut, God thy Creator—clothed with flesh without seed in thy virginal womb—hath not cast aside, preserving thee, O most glorious one, such as thou wert before thy childbirth. Through thee we have been reconciled to Christ our Lord, thy sweetest Son.

"Thou art the only advocate and help of sinners, and of those bereft of aid, thou the most safe haven of the shipwrecked, thou the solace of the world, thou the refuge of orphans, thou the redemption and deliverance of captives, thou the rejoicing of the sick, the consolation of mourners, and saving-health (salus) of all, thou the firm stay of monks and solitaries, and the hope of seculars, thou the gladness of the world, O Lady princess, Queen most excelling, and altogether blessed, maiden most honourable, Lady of ladies, most pure and most chaste. Beneath thy protection we fly, O Holy Mother of God, beneath the wings of thy maternal goodness and mercy defend and guard us. Have pity upon us who are defiled with the filth of our sins, and by our innumerable faults and crimes have offended God our Creator, the Judge of all; lest Satan, our most hurtful and hateful enemy, insolently glory and arise against us, and we should have to confess that thy servants fail of the hope they place in thee, and the tongue of detractors calumniate us. We have no other confidence save in thee, O Virgin, O Virgin most faithful and true (sincerissima), since from our mother's arms to thee our Lady have we miserable been entrusted, and are called thy clients. Suffer not, then, that we be led away by the malignant Satan to the gates of hell. For thou art our haven, O Virgin inviolate, our gracious guardian and helper. We are, in fine, wholly under thy patronage and protection: wherefore we fly for refuge to thee alone, and with many tears, O most blessed Mother, we implore thee, and prostrate ourselves before thee, suppliantly begging and beseeching that thy most sweet Son our Saviour and giver of life to all—on account of the many crimes that we have committed—will not take us away from the midst, and as a lion rend our poor souls, or cut us down like the barren fig-tree. But we earnestly pray that securely we may attain to Christ, and enter the courts of the blessed, where are no tears, nor mourning, nor trouble, nor harm, nor calamity, nor death, nor straits any more, but untold joy, exceeding delight of the just, pleasures without end, exultation and rejoicing, glory, and splendour.†

* For what is here omitted see *supra*, on *Exod.* iii. 2, p. 76.

† *Is.* xxv. 9, *Apoc.* vii. 16.

"Fill my mouth, O Lady, henceforth with the grace of thy sweetness, and illumine my mind, O thou that art full of grace. Move my tongue and my lips eagerly to sing to thee praises with joyful heart, especially that sweet angelic strain, of all others the most renowned by far, which at Nazareth the Angel Gabriel, in guise of servant, sang aloud to thee, the most pure Mother of my God, —that salutation most august, I mean, most befitting and worthy of the world's redemption, of healing and salvation for all souls.

"Deign then that I too, thy humble servant praise thee, O sacred Virgin, and with sweet devotion say: Hail, thou glorious and elect vessel of God. Hail, O Lady, Mary, full of grace. Hail, amongst women Virgin most blessed. Hail, most brightly shining star from whom Christ came forth. Hail, most resplendent light, Mother and Virgin. Hail, thou who wondrously gavest birth to the Monarch of the universe. Hail, Queen and Mistress, of all the most sublime. Hail, thou canticle of cherubim and seraphim, and hymnody of angels. Hail, peace, joy, consolation, and salvation of the world. Hail, gladness of mankind. Hail, praise of the patriarchs, and glory of the prophets. Hail, beauty of martyrs, and crown of saints. Hail, glory and praise of the pious who live in solitude. Hail, most splendid adornment of heaven's hierarchy. Hail, fair theme of all hymnographers. Hail, thou peerless marvel of the entire universe. Hail, thou charm of all the earth-born. Hail, paradise of delights, of all pleasure and immortality. Hail, tree of life, joy and gladness. Hail, lily of the valleys, valley of the faithful, and their salvation.

"Hail, most tranquil haven, and most ardently longed for rescuer of the tempest-tost from billows and storms. Hail, succour of those in danger. Hail, resurrection of our first father Adam. Hail, sweet liberty. Hail, parent of all. Hail, fountain of grace, and of all the solace. Hail, refuge and hospice of sinners. Hail, mercy-seat of the afflicted. Hail, place of sanctuary in Jerusalem. Hail, most glorious throne of our Creator. Hail, most illustrious splendour of the age. Hail, hope of all the good who suffer under affliction. Hail, sweet solace and protection of the converted. Hail, of men and women alike Queen and Patroness. Hail, best mediatress between God and man. Hail, most efficacious peace-maker of the whole world. Hail, our Lady who by thy prayers obtainest for thy faithful ones a covenant, peace, and a sceptre wherewith to rule all. Hail, glory and joy of all priests. Hail, Virgin, comfort of solitaries. Hail, Queen of the heavenly citizens, and Mistress of the angels. Hail, gate of heaven, ladder, and means whereby all may ascend thither. Hail, thou by whom are unlocked (Ave, reseramentum) the gates of the celestial paradise. Hail, our consoler who hast assuaged the griefs and calmed the troubles of the afflicted, and removed all oppression. Hail, key of the heavenly kingdom. Hail, most safe port of voyagers here on earth. Hail, firm salvation of all Christians who in truth and sincerity have recourse to thee. Hail, bright luminary whereby the world is illumined. Hail, cherishing (alma) Mother of Christ the Son of the Living God. Hail, our universal, signal protection, and glory. Hail, thou who didst fold in thy bosom, and hold in thy arms Him whom no space can contain. Hail, thou who didst rear Christ the giver of life; Christ, I say, the most merciful Creator of all things, our most sweet Lord Jesus, the rearer and nourisher of the whole world, the most gracious lover of mankind, and Almighty Father of all, to whom be ascribed honour, glory, thanksgiving and

power, for the praise and jubilant exaltation of His Majesty, with the Eternal Father and the Holy Ghost now and always world without end. Amen."

"By the prayers and merits of the most holy ever-Virgin Mother of God, of all the heavenly host, and the whole company of angels, cherubim, and seraphim, prophets and apostles, martyrs, and confessors, and by the intercession of all saints, have pity on Thy creature, my God most clement; and place Thy humble servants at Thy right hand in the day of the tremendous judgment. And, O Lord, Author and giver of life, look not on our evil deeds which we have committed by transgressing Thy law; but have regard rather, I beseech Thee, to Thy infinite clemency, goodness and mercy, and have pity upon us. Amen." *

"Most holy Lady Mother of God . . . have regard to me." †

"My Lady most holy, who art accessible to all who ask thee." ‡

Luke xxiii. 39-43, *Matt.* xxvii. 41-44, *Mark* xv. 27, 31, 32.

"The Scripture account of the conversion of the penitent thief," writes Father Morris, "requires some tradition to clear it up: for S. Matthew says, the *thieves* also who were crucified with Him reproached Him with the same thing as the scribes and elders. And S. Mark gives the same account. Therefore we want some cause to explain how it came about that S. Dimas repented. If no cause can be found, there will be either a careless account upon the part of these two Evangelists, or else S. Luke flatly contradicts them. Now it is an ancient tradition that the penitent thief was on the right hand of the Cross; § and it seems likely that Mary, if she moved about, would yet stand most upon that side, as S. John would feel it the place of honour, and yield it to her. S. Ephrem attributes the conversion of the thief to her intercession." His words are:—

"Adam, when naked was beautiful. His thrifty wife furnished him with a garment wrought by her hands, to wit, a filthy garment all defiled with grievous guilt of sin. Paradise saw fallen the first-made man, and mourned the fall to which himself had given cause. Mary sought out another garment for the penitent thief, fitted it on him, and with the promise that then was added, raised him up to hopes of a better lot. Him too Paradise saw: with open arms embraced him: and allotted to him the seat vacant through Adam's banishment." ‖

"And there is the tradition that Mary had received kindness and hospitality from the mother of that thief in her journey to

* *Threni B. V. M.* Opp. Gr. et Lat. Tom. iii. p. 575 *sq.*

† *Precationes ad Deip. Ib.* p. 524.

‡ See *Ib.* pp. 528-532. The *Threni* and *Precationes* are ranked amongst the *Opera Dubia* of S. Ephrem. Their style, at least in the version which we now have, is that rather of Chrysippus in the fifth, or of Hesychius and S. Sophronius at the end of the sixth and the beginning of the seventh century.

§ Gretser, *De Cruce*, p. 186, Lib. ii. cap. 4.

‖ *De Paradiso Eden* iv. Opp. Syr. vol. iii. p. 572.

Egypt.* These things put together make it intelligible how, though both the thieves blasphemed at first, one was afterwards converted. Mary interceded with Jesus for a person in whom she felt interested through motives of gratitude. Of course the predestination of God will account for any change in any sinner; but we are here inquiring by what means that predestination took effect. When S. Paul was converted, it may be referred to the predestination of God, but this does not prevent, but that S. Stephen's intercession may have had a great deal to do with it. Be this as it may, the statement just made serves to indicate what sort of power S. Ephrem ascribed to the Blessed Virgin: admit it and you can at once explain the apparent discrepancy between the Evangelists. Both thieves blasphemed till Mary prayed, and one was converted when she prayed."†

S. EPIPHANIUS.

S. Epiphanius says, that whereas some heretics dared to insult the most blessed Virgin by denying her perpetual virginity, others went to the opposite extreme, by a wicked and absurd exaggeration of her honour. In this latter way certain weak silly women in Arabia came to exalt her as a goddess, and were so mad as to offer sacrifices to her name of little round cakes or rolls (κολλύριδια). Hence they were called Collyridians, forming themselves into a distinct sect, which for a time gained many adherents, who assembled together for their blasphemous rites in the temples which they erected and dedicated to the Virgin.

In refuting their errors S. Epiphanius brings forward examples from Scripture of how, through the occasion of holy persons, absurd and idolatrous honours were paid to them, and continues:—

"Many such like things have happened in the world through the error of those deceived; not because the Saints were themselves a stumbling-block to any, but by reason rather of the capricious vagaries of men disposed to go astray and turn aside to evil. . . . Most assuredly, if the holy Virgin died and was buried, in honour is her repose, in purity her end, in virginity her crown. Or, again, supposing she was put to death, according to what is written: *Her soul too a sword shall pierce*, then her glory is amongst the martyrs, and her holy body in benedictions (ἐν μακαρισμοῖς), since through her it was that light

* "That the Holy Family were hospitably entertained for a night by a troop of robbers, who infested the borders of Egypt, and that one of the children, afterwards the penitent thief, was miraculously cured of leprosy on that occasion, is not improbable." Morris, *Jesus Son of Mary*, vol. ii. p. 15.

† *Ib.* p. 75.

arose upon the world. Or, on the other hand, if it were that (*i.e.*, perhaps) she remained (ἤτοι δε ἔμεινε): for God is able to do all things whatsoever He wills; and, in fact, no one knew her end.

"We should not honour the saints beyond what is fitting, but honour their Lord and Master. Let then a stop be put to the error of these deluded people. For Mary is not a goddess, nor had she her body from heaven, but was born as others from human parents, though, like Isaac, she was given according to promise, by a special dispensation of providence (κατ' ἐπαγγελίαν δε, ὥσπερ ὁ Ἰσαὰκ, οἰκονομηθεῖσα). But let no one offer sacrifice to her name, or he will ruin his own soul. Let no one be found, on the other hand, who should, as though drunk with wine, insult the holy Virgin. God forbid! Since Virgin she was both before and after she gave birth to the Saviour." *

"What things we have judged to be more religious and profitable to the Church, these we have spoken concerning the holy Virgin, pleading in defence of her, who in all respects is full of grace, as said the Angel: *Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with thee.* . . . The Saints are in honour, and their repose in glory, their departure from this life in perfection, their lot in bliss, their choir with that of angels in holy mansions, their habitation in heaven," etc.†

"Yea verily, holy was the body of Mary, but assuredly she was not a goddess. She was in truth the Virgin, and most honoured, yet not given to us for adoration, but herself adoring Him Who of her was engendered in flesh, come down from heaven from His Father's bosom. Hence too the Gospel puts us on our guard in those words spoken by the Lord Himself: *What to Me and to thee, woman? My hour is not yet come.* Where He expressly called her woman, lest some should suppose that the holy Virgin was of a nature more excellent than human; and as though prophesying—with prevision of the sects and heresies there were to be on earth—that none, through excessive admiration of the holy Virgin, should fall into the silly pratings of heresy." ‡

"Gabriel was sent to Mary, who was not simply a Virgin, but a Virgin espoused to a husband,§ that by mention of a spouse, it might be manifest that Mary was really human." ||

"Mary was indeed the vessel of election, but a woman, and in no way of a different nature from others, though in mind and sense had in highest honour (ἐν τιμῇ τετιμημένη), as are the bodies of the saints, and in whatever way else I might say that would the more redound to her glory and praise (καὶ εἴ τι περισσότερον πρὸς δοξολογίαν εἴποιμι). As, for example, Elias, virgin from the womb, taken up too without having ever seen death; or John, who reclined on the Lord's breast, whom Jesus loved; or the holy Thecla: yet still more honourable than Thecla was Mary, through whom was vouchsafed the divine mystery. But neither was Elias to be adored, though he is still amongst the living; nor was John adored, nor Thecla. . . . For if God does not will angels to be adored, how much less her who was engendered of Anne, and daughter of Joachim, given by promise to her parents, as the fruit of their prayers and most earnest desires, but yet conceived and born according to the natural order. For though we find in the history and tradition of Mary that it was said to her father Joachim in his solitude, 'Thy wife shall

* *Hær.* 78, nn. 23, 24, P. G. Tom. 42, pp. 735-7.
‡ *Ib.* 79, 4, p. 745.
|| *Hær.* 77, 7, *Ib.* p. 649.
† *Ib.*
§ *Luke* i. 17, ii. 7.

conceive,' yet this did not happen otherwise than humanly. For the angel who was sent, foretold only what was about to be, that there might be no doubt with respect to what actually took place, as having been already ordained by God, and as happened to the just man." *

In refuting the Collyridian heresy S. Epiphanius shows at considerable length that such a thing as women being priests was unheard of in Scripture—the deaconesses, he says, appointed by the Apostles never acted as such, but had their own particular duties, especially that of assisting at the baptism of women. He thus continues :—

"The Maker and Sovereign Lord of creation formed Himself anew from the Virgin as from earth. But God came down from Heaven, the Word clothed Himself with flesh from a holy Virgin, not, assuredly, that the Virgin should be adored, nor to make a goddess of her, nor that we should offer sacrifice to her name, nor that, now for the first time after so many generations, she should appoint women to be priests. This was not the will of God for Salome, nor for Mary herself. He gave her no charge to minister baptism, to bless disciples, nor did He bid her rule over the earth. But this only He willed that she should be a work of sanctification (ἁγιάσμα αὐτὴν εἶναι), and should merit to be (or, be accounted) worthy (καταξιωθῆναι) of His kingdom. Let Mary be had in honour, but let the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost be adored. Let no one adore Mary." †

"He who honours the Lord, honours also a Saint ; whilst he who dishonours a Saint, dishonours also his own Lord. Let Mary be in herself the holy Virgin, the holy vessel." ‡

S. Epiphanius speaks of :—

"The fragrant perfume that breathes over the world through the virtue of the holy children of virginity, which had its beginning from the holy Mary." §

S. CHRYSOSTOM.

"If we have to fly for refuge . . . we should do so to real friends. Therefore when thou seest God chastising thee . . . have recourse to His friends, the martyrs and saints, who were well-pleasing to Him, and have much confidence of access (παῤῥησίαν, boldness of speech) before Him." ||

"Let us then not be, so to say, idly gaping in our recourse to others [*i.e.*, the saints]. For, in truth, the prayers of the saints have the very greatest efficacy; but this is when we are ourselves repenting and becoming better. For even Moses, who saved his brother and six thousand others from the impending wrath of God, was yet unable to rescue his sister. . . . This I say, not that we should fail to supplicate the saints, but lest we be ourselves negligent, and, falling into listlessness and slumber, leave our affairs entirely in the hands of others. Whereas when our Lord said, *Make to yourselves*

* *Hær.* 79, 5, p. 748.
† *Ib.* n. 7, p. 750.
‡ *Ib.* 78, 22, p. 733.
§ *Ib.* 25, p. 740.
|| *Adv. Judæos*, viii. 5, 6, Patr. Gr. T. 48, p. 937.

friends, He did not stop there, but went on to speak of *the unjust mammon*, thereby signifying almsgiving also." *

"Knowing this, beloved, let us have recourse for succour to the intercessions of the saints and beseech them to pray for us. Let us however, not only confide in their prayers, but also ourselves put our affairs in proper order, and be continually striving to change for the better, so that thus we may give good ground for the intercession that is being made for us." †

"The memorial is of the martyrs, but the honour of martyrs is the glory of Him for whom they were martyred. Martyrs are honoured for having suffered for Christ, but Christ is adored for having suffered for all." ‡

"Let us therefore pray altogether, rulers and ruled, women and men, old and young, slaves and free men, taking the blessed Meletius as partner in our prayers. For he has greater power now, and a more ardent love for us, . . . so that as we are now here near his shrine [*θήκη*, the chest containing his sacred relics], we may hereafter find our place near to his everlasting tabernacle, and obtain the good things that are treasured up in store." §

"You have assuredly an ardent love for these saints; let us then, enkindled with this fire, prostrate ourselves before their relics, and crowd around their shrines. For the very shrines of martyrs are possessed of much power, as certainly the sacred bones of martyrs have great strength. Not only on the day of the feast, but on other days also, let us besiege them, let us supplicate them, let us constrain them to become our patronesses (*προστάτιδας*) for they have much influence and weight (*παῤῥησίαν*) this not only had they when alive, but have now also that they are dead, may much more when now dead. For now they bear the stigmata of Christ, and when they show these stigmata, they have all power to persuade the King. Since then they enjoy such great influence and friendship with God, when, by our continued siege, and constant supplication to them, we have made them ours, let us through them impetrate mercy from God: which may we all obtain by the grace and loving-kindness of our Lord Jesus Christ, with whom be glory to the Father and the Holy Ghost, now and for ever world without end. Amen." ||

"How shall we be able henceforth to render God propitious? How appease Him when angry with us? Three days ago, when the great storm of rain was carrying away everything with it, and snatching from the mouths of the husbandmen, so to say, their very table; striking down the bearded ears, and laying all things waste with the excessive floods, there were made litanies and supplications; and our whole city ran as a torrent to the places of the Apostles. And we took for our advocates the holy Peter and blessed Andrew, that pair of Apostles; Paul too, and Andrew. Then after this, when the anger was calmed, crossing the sea and braving the billows, we had recourse to the Coryphæi, Peter, the foundation of the faith, and Paul the vessel of election, celebrating a spiritual feast, proclaiming their conflicts, their trophies, and victories over the devils." ¶

* *In Matt.* Hom. v. 4, 5. † *In cap.* xix. *Gen.* Hom. xliv. Tom. 54, p. 408.

‡ *In Memoriam Mart. Anon.* Int. Opp. S. Chrysost. Tom. 50, p. 827.

§ *De S. Meletio Antiocheno*, 3, *Ib.* p. 520. See *De Fato et Providentia*, Or. ii. ad fin. *Ib.* p. 780.

|| *De SS. Bernice et Prodoce*, n. 7, Tom. 49, p. 640.

¶ *Contra Ludos et Theatra* i., Tom. 56, p. 265.

"And even now there is not wanting to God a Debbora, there is not wanting to God a Jael. We too have the holy Virgin and Mother of God, Mary, interceding for us. For if some chance woman obtained a victory: how much more does not Christ's Mother confound the enemies of the truth? The foe, in putting on his armour, deemed she was a woman to be laughed and mocked at, but found a great warrior for his combatant. He reckoned not that he was nearing his sepulchre, and yet a burial was found for him. He thought her to be dead, and yet was slain by her. We have, indeed, Our Lady, Mary the holy Mother of God; still we have need of the Apostles. Let us say to Paul, as said they of old: *Pass over into Macedonia, and help us.** We have then, the Apostles, let us not grow slothful. We have too, Our Lady, the holy Mother of God, the ever-Virgin Mary, let us not give over (*μὴ ὀκνήσωμεν*). We have, besides, the choir of Martyrs, let us not be sluggish. Let us not only supplicate, but if it seems good, let us also fast. . . . What I have just now said, I repeat: Let us beseech Mary the holy glorious Virgin and Mother of God; let us beseech the holy glorious Apostles; let us beseech the holy Martyrs.

"In defence of the godly there fight an evangelist host (*εὐαγγελικὸς στρατὸς*), the throng of prophets, the company of apostles, and the prayers of martyrs. Think not that only martyrs pray for us; since angels also supplicate God for us in our afflictions, and not only supplicate, but also obtain answer from His goodness. The prophet Zacharias says: *And the angel that spoke in me answered and said to the Lord.* Now this was the prayer of the Angel: *O Lord Almighty, how long wilt Thou not have pity on Jerusalem, and on the cities of Juda, with which Thou hast been angry? This is now the seventieth year.* What then? Did God reject the Angel's prayer? By no means. What followed? *The Lord,* he says, *answered the Angel that spoke in me good words, comfortable words.*† Let us then also beseech the Lord of angels, and He will send one of His angels who will put to rout the whole host of our enemies. . . ."

The writer then goes on to speak of the great deeds wrought by women; of Debbora and Jael, and of Abimelech who met his death at the hands of a woman; and thus continues:—

"When any one, only forced by necessity, runs to one of those more powerful, he does not address him in worthy manner, and the latter might say, 'Before thy necessity thou knewest not how to honour and be worshipful to me, but now only in thy strait.' Honour, free from necessity, is without suspicion. If thou pay court to the judge before being in difficulty, thou wilt find him on thy side in thy straits; for he will know that not necessity, but love is thy motive. Let us then now become friends of the martyrs, not through necessity, but from love; before the winter, so that when afflicted in winter, we may then find spring in winter-time. We thus speak, not commanding, but entreating; not laying down the law, but humbly beseeching all to live soberly and modestly. Now God is able, above all our faith, and beyond all our speech, to confound His enemies, and to have mercy on the world, to bestow honour on kings and to establish kingdoms; and to show

* *Acts* xvi. 9. † *Zach.* i. 9, 12, 13.

forth His own glory in Christ Jesus our Lord, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen." *

S. JEROME.

"If Apostles and Martyrs yet living in the flesh can pray for others, whilst they should be still caring for themselves, how much more after their crowns, victories, and triumphs." †

"Go forth, I pray, for a little while from prison, and picture to your eyes the recompense for present toil, which neither eye hath seen, nor ear hath heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive. What a day will that be when Mary, the Lord's Mother, shall come to meet thee, attended with virgin choirs! When, after the Red Sea passed, and Pharao with his host drowned, Mary, the sister of Aaron, bearing in her hand the timbrel,‡ will lead the chant, to which they will make response: *Let us sing to the Lord: for He is gloriously magnified, the horse and the rider He hath thrown into the sea.*" §

S. THEOPHILUS, Bishop of Alexandria.

"S. Theophilus, bishop of Alexandria in the time of S. Jerome left in writing the following words: 'The prayers of His Mother are a pleasure to the Son, because He desires to grant all that is granted on her account, and thus recompense her for the favour she did Him in giving His body.' Salazar in *Prov.* viii. 8." ||

S. AUGUSTINE.

"Our religion should not consist in the worship of dead men. For if they lived piously, they are not to be accounted as desirous of such honours; but their wish is, that we should worship Him through whose illumination they rejoice in having us sharers of their merit. They are to be honoured therefore for imitation's sake, not to be adored for religion's sake. . . .

"What then the highest angel worships, is to be worshipped also by the last (least and lowest) of men: it is, in fact, through failing to worship this, that man's nature becomes lost. For not from one source is an angel wise, from another, man; from one source an angel truthful, from another, man; but from one and the same unchangeable wisdom and truth. This was, moreover, what was expressly effected for our salvation by the dispensation in time: namely, that the very Virtue of God, and the unchangeable Wisdom of God, consubstantial and coeternal with the Father, deigned to take human nature, thereby to teach us that the object of worship for man is the same as is to be worshipped by every intellectual and rational creature. This too, we should believe is what the holiest angels, and the most excelling ministering spirits of God desire, namely, that together with them we should worship the

* *De uno Legislatore, Hom. De divers. utriusq. Testam. locis.* Int. Opp. S. Chrysost. The author of this Homily is uncertain. He wrote most probably in the reign of Justinian (527-565).

† *Adv. Vigilant.* n. 7.

‡ In one edition, Soror Aaron in sua manu cymbalum tenens, is absent; in any case she here personates Our Blessed Lady. See *supra*, p. 192.

§ *Exod.* xvi. *Ep.* xii., *Ad Eustoch., De custodia virginitatis.*

|| *The Glories of Mary*, by S. Alph. Lig. p. 162.

One God, in the contemplation of whom they are blessed. For it is not by the sight of an angel that we are blessed, but even as they, by seeing the truth, whereby we come to love these same angels, and to congratulate them in their bliss. . . . Hence we honour them in charity, not in servitude. But we do not build temples for them, for they know that we, provided we are in a good state, are ourselves temples of the Most High God. Rightly therefore do we read in Scripture of some one being hindered by an angel from adoring him, and enjoined to adore the One God under whom he was fellow-servant with the angel.* Whereas, should angels encourage us to serve and worship them as gods, they would be like proud men, who, could they have their own way, would be similarly worshipped. . . . But the just, who take all their delights in God alone, wish joy to such as praise them, provided by their own deeds God Himself is glorified, whilst, should they be praised only for themselves, they correct those who thus err when they can, and when they cannot, they wish them no joy, but rather amendment of such a fault. Now if the good angels and all God's holy ministers resemble these, nay are yet more pure and holy, why should we be afraid to offend any of them—unless we are superstitious—by tending, together with them and by their help, to the One God, and binding fast (religantes) our souls to Him alone—whence the word *religion* is thought to be derived—free from all superstition?

"Behold, I worship One God, one Principle of all things, even that Wisdom whereby is wise whatever soul is wise, and one Reward of bliss (munus), whereby are blessed whatever things are blessed. Whoever of angels loves this God, certain am I that he loves me too. Whoever abides in Him, and can hear human prayers, in Him he hears me. Whoever has Him for his good, in Him he helps me, and cannot grudge me having also a share in Him."†

"Stephen our fellow-servant is not to be worshipped as God. But he prays as a servant. . . . An angel showed many marvels to S. John the Evangelist: troubled at the marvels, he adored him. A man adored an angel: and said the angel to the man: *Rise, what doest thou? Adore Him: for I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren.*"‡

"To pass over other matters regarding the service of religion, wherewith God is worshipped—no one would dare to say that sacrifice should be offered to any but to God alone. Many things have, in fact, been usurped from divine worship, and are transferred to human honours, whether from over-humility, or pestilent adulation; in such a way however, that, whilst the persons to whom they are transferred are regarded as men, they are called those who should be worshipped and venerated—but if much more is added to them—adored also. Yet who ever deemed that sacrifice was to be offered except to Him whom either he knew, or thought, or imagined to be God?"§

"The faithful know that, according to ecclesiastical discipline, when martyrs are commemorated at the altar of God, prayer is not made for them;

* *Apoc.* xxii. 9.

† *De vera religione*, cap. lv. 108-12, P. L. Tom. 34, pp. 169-71.

‡ Serm. 319, *De Steph. Mart.* vi. Tom. 38, p. 1442.

§ *De Civ. Dei*, Lib. x. c. 4, Tom. 40, p. 281.

though this is done for the rest of the departed whom we commemorate. For it would be doing an injury to pray for a martyr, to whose prayers we should commend ourselves." *

"The justice of the martyrs is perfect, because in their very passion they were perfected. For this cause prayer is not offered for them in the Church. For the other faithful departed we pray, for martyrs we do not pray, since they departed so perfect, as not to be our clients, but our advocates. Yet not this in themselves, but in Him to whom they cleaved as perfect members to the Head. For He is in truth the one Advocate who intercedes for us, sitting at the right hand of the Father: but the one Advocate as He is also the one Pastor. . . . Still, though Christ was Pastor, was not Peter a pastor? Yea, Peter was also a pastor." †

"We glorify God in the martyrs." ‡

Referring to Moses' prayer for the Israelites, *Exod.* xxxii. 31, 32, the Saint says :—

"And here is clearly shown how greatly the intercession of the Saints avails with God." §

"Whatever that be which is signified by Abraham's bosom, there my Nebridius lives. . . . He lays not now his ear to my mouth, but his spiritual mouth to Thy fountain, and drinks in as much as he is able, of wisdom in proportion to his thirst, endlessly happy. Still I think not that he is so inebriated thereby as to forget me; seeing that Thou, Lord, whom he drinketh, art mindful of us." ||

"The Christian people unites in celebrating with religious solemnity the memories of the martyrs,¶ as well to excite imitation, as to have a share in their merits, and to be helped by their prayers." **

"We admire them, they have compassion on us. We thank and congratulate them, they pray for us." ††

"This Church in heaven continues ever blessed amidst the holy Angels, and gives help, as is meet, to its part that is away from home: because both will be one in eternal fellowship, and is now one by the bond of charity, since the whole has been instituted to adore the One God." ‡‡

* *Serm.* 159, 1, T. 38, p. 868.

† *Serm.* 285, n. 5, *Ib.*

‡ *Serm.* 273, *Ib.* p. 1249.

§ *In Ps.* cv. 23, Tom. 57, p. 1412. See *Gen. ad litt.* c. 34, 57.

|| *Confess.* L. ix. n. 6. See *Ep.* 269, n. 5. As to how the Saints hear the prayers of their clients, know their needs, and help them, also on the distinction between the adoration (latria) which is given to God alone, and the honours that are paid to the Saints, see S. Augustine, *In Ps.* cviii. n. 17, *Serm.* 319, n. 6, *De cura pro mortuis*, nn. 6, 7, 19, 20, *De Civ. Dei*, L. viii. c. 27, L. xxi. c. 18, L. xxii. c. 10.

¶ Or, flocks to the memorials of the martyrs, *i.e.*, their shrines and relics. "Memorias martyrum . . . concelebrat."

** *Contr. Faust.* xx. 21.

†† *Serm.* 280, 6.

‡‡ *Enchirid. De Fide, Spe,* et *Caritate*, n. 15.

The early Christians were often used, when praying, to raise their arms stretched out in the form of a cross; and thus the Blessed Virgin is represented in some very ancient pictures. Prudentius alludes to this pious custom in the following lines:—

"Non ausa est cohibere pœna palmas,
In normam crucis, ad Patrem levandas." *

Which may be thus rendered:—

"No pain of torture dared the martyr stay
From raising hands, in form of cross outstretched,
To God his heavenly Father, suppliant."

Testimonies abound in the Hymns of Prudentius and other early Christian poets to the cultus of the Saints, and veneration of their relics and pictures.† Such as refer to Our Lady will be found in a later Chapter.

S. PAULINUS.

S. Paulinus is a striking example in the fourth century of what is not unfrequently met with in the lives of holy persons and devout Christians in every age, *viz.*, a very special devotion to some particular saint. From the time that in early years he first entered the Church of S. Felix at Nola, and was witness of some of the numerous miracles that were constantly being wrought there through the Martyr's intercession,‡ he became attached to Christianity, and gave in his name as a Catechumen. The love which he had for S. Felix was so deep that he remained faithfully devoted to him until the end of his life, and always bore with him, when at home and on journey, a picture of his holy patron.§

Paulinus was baptised on Easter day, May 389, at Bordeaux, when about thirty-five years old.|| In 392 he renounced the world, in which he had high position and great possessions; thenceforth living with his beloved wife Therasia in holy continency. He says:—

* *Perist. Hymn.* vi. 106, 7, Patr. Lat. Tom. 60, p. 419.

† See Tom. 57, p. 664 *sq.*

‡ S. Paulinus in his *Natalitia* gives the details of the life of S. Felix, and of the miracles wrought at his tomb. S. Felix was born at Nola. The Bollandists place his death in 312, Muratori a century earlier. He was ordained priest. The relics of S. Felix, Bishop and Martyr, honoured at Nola are probably his. In S. Gregory's Sacramentary the Feast of S. Felix is 18 Cal. Febr. See *Carmina* xviii. 195-205, 220-465, xiv. 23-57, xxv. 282-394, xxiv. 25-39, xx. 45 *sq.*, 85-99, Patr. Lat. Tom. 61.

§ *Natalit.* xii. 350, xiii. 6-15.

|| *Ep.* iii., iv., x., n. 1.

"Who has taught me to despise all things, in order to give myself to Jesus Christ? Who but thou, Felix, my powerful protector? It is thou who hast broken the chains of flesh." *

He was ordained priest at Barcelona, Christmas 393.† On his return to Italy and Rome he was received with joy by the Christian world; and was present with S. Ambrose and S. Augustine at the great ceremony which took place at Milan on the finding of the relics of SS. Gervasius and Protasius; when so many miracles were wrought through those martyrs' intercession, and to which as eye-witness S. Augustine himself bears testimony.‡

S. Paulinus was a man of letters, and a real Christian poet, who has been highly appreciated by good judges, as equal to Prudentius, and superior to others of that age. He had a very interesting correspondence with the poet Ausonius, who was not a Christian. After Christmas 394 he composed his first poem in honour of S. Felix.§ In his second, written in 395, he says:—

"Fifteen years have passed since I made my vow,‖ and consecrated to thee my soul. Business, obliging me to journey over land and sea, has kept me far from thy tomb. Thou knowest that I have always invoked thee in difficulties and dangers. Under thy guidance (this has not been without thee, for I have felt thy protection), I have travelled over the seas, I have triumphed over all danger in Jesus Christ our Lord. Always by land and sea have I owed my safety to thee."

He says, in fine that to him he owes everything for this present life, and all his hopes for the next; and accounts himself as a slave given to the Saint by Christ Himself. He then goes on to relate his deliverance from great peril by means of his holy patron.¶ S. Paulinus was bishop of Nola, 409. He built there a new church in honour of S. Felix, and restored the old one with great magnificence, adorning it with paintings from the New Testament, and the new church with paintings from the Old Testament. S. Augustine tells us of a dead man

* *Nat.* iii. 449, 50, xiii. 440-7. Socrates is wrong in saying (v. 21) that at this epoch many bishops in the East lived with their wives. One only exception can be cited, that namely of Antoninus, bishop of Ephesus, about 400, who was accused of continuing relations with his wife, and having had children by her. Bellarm. L. 1, *De Cler.* et P. Allatius, *De consensu utriusque Ecclesiæ.*

† *Ep.* iv. n. 4, ii. n. 3, 4, xi. n. 8.

‡ *Contr. Donatist.*, *De unitate Ecclesiæ* 50, *De Civ. Dei*, Lib. xxii. c. 8, *Confess.* c. 7, etc.

§ *Carm.* xii., *Natal.* i. 15-31.

That is, when he first entered the Church of S. Felix at Nola and there witnessed the miracles that took place at the Saint's intercession.

¶ *Carm.* xiii., *Nat.* ii. 6-13, 14 *sq.*, p. 345 *sq.*

who was raised to life by means of the consecrated oil that was used for the lamp that burned before the tomb of S. Felix.* There were relics of other Saints in the church and images of martyrs.†

S. Paulinus enjoyed the friendship and esteem of those of his contemporaries who were most eminent for sanctity and learning, and particularly of S. Augustine, with whom he had frequent correspondence, and whom he consulted on the interpretation of passages of Scripture.‡ It was on the occasion of his asking the holy doctor wherein lay the special utility of burying the dead near the tombs of martyrs and saints, as was customary at that time,§ that S. Augustine wrote his treatise *De cura mortuorum.*‖

In his poems on S. John the Baptist S. Paulinus has some remarkable verses consecrated to the Blessed Virgin and her visit to S. Elizabeth.¶ In his *Epithalmium to Julia and Ia*, he says, that the husband should be to the wife what Jesus Christ is to His Church: and if such are the dispositions of the spouses, "Mary the Virgin Mother will assist at the nuptials, she who is the model of the Church, which one may equally call the Sister and the Spouse of the Saviour." **

S. FULGENTIUS—S. ELEUTHERIUS—S. METHODIUS.

For striking examples of invocation of Our Blessed Lady, see the passages cited from S. Fulgentius, S. Eleutherius, Bishop of Tournay, *Supra* pp. 138-141, that also from S. Methodius (Inter Opera), pp. 155, 6.

S. BASIL OF SELEUCIA.

In the chapter on Our Lady's dignity and sanctity we gave a passage from one of this Saint's sermons which bears much on the power of intercession.†† These sermons are followed by the Life of S. Thecla, the genuineness of which there is no good reason for questioning. The first book gives her life and martyrdom, closing with an emphatic appeal to her patronage. The second book records some thirty miracles wrought by the martyr, in consequence of prayers addressed to her after death.‡‡ These

* *De Civ. Dei*, xxii. 8. † *Carm.* xviii. 32. ‡ See *supra*, p. 157.

§ Thus S. Ambrose wished to be buried near the shrine of SS. Gervasius and Protasius.

‖ S. August., *Ep.* 27, n. 3.

¶ *Carm.* vi. 8-163, Patr. Lat. Tom. 61, p. 444.

** *Carm.* xxii. 142-152, 153-165, 165-175. See *S. Paulinc, Évêque de Nole*, par Ad. Busé, traduit de l'allemand par L. Dancoisne, Paris, 1858.

†† Patr. Gr. Tom. 93, pp. 561-618. ‡‡ *Ibid.*

however, says S. Basil, form but a small part of the miracles and favours obtained through S. Thecla's intercession. "It would be difficult," says Fr. Waterworth, "to find a narrative of the same length in any age, or by any writer, more decisive in favour of the invocation of Saints." * The description which S. Basil gives of Seleucia where the sacred relics of S. Thecla were venerated, reads like what may be seen in Lourdes and other places of holy pilgrimage in modern times; as the following passage shows:—

"Thence (*i.e.*, from heaven) the virgin's gracious bounty flows as from a fountain, supplying remedies to petitioners and suppliants, so that the place is a public hospital for cures, and has become the common propitiatory of the whole earth. Hence her temple, or we should rather say her city—for it has assumed at once the appearance, usefulness, and beauty of a city—is never found without citizens and strangers; as people crowd thither in great numbers from all parts, some indeed with the only view of doing her honour and offering up prayers, and desirous of devoting and consecrating to her some portion of their substance; but others for the sake of cure, and obtaining relief from diseases, sufferings, and demons. Of these things, however, if God will, and with the virgin's help, I will make mention in another volume. . . . Certainly, not one of those who have supplicated for cure or relief has ever been unkindly repelled . . . but all, after obtaining what they asked for or needed, go their way singing hymns, giving thanks and praise, fully satisfied that they have found the miracles and cures exceed even the report, and their own expectations. May it be that we also, O virgin, martyr, and apostle, ever find thee propitious and kind . . . interceding in our behalf with God for what is just; being always present to us, guarding us, and of thyself supplying us with what is allowed thee to supply, and from God obtaining (conciliating) for us whatsoever things are most beautiful, most excellent, beneficial, and pleasing to thee, O virgin, and to Christ our God who supplies them."

Many passages occur in the second book expressive of S. Thecla's intercession, the following for example:—

"She is indeed associated with the angels; but not even now is she absent from us, but in a better lot, she now with more abundant help looks after and takes care of us." †

S. GREGORY THE GREAT.

"When we disclose our thoughts to holy men and spread forth our desire before them, whether they be still living amongst us, or have already entered into eternal life, and when, in dependence on God, we pray them to intercede for us and offer to Christ the Lord the desire of our hearts, what else do we, but adjure the daughters of Jerusalem that they will tell the Beloved, to whom they are more near than we are, that we languish with love? Holy

* *Faith of Catholics*, vol. iii. p. 397. † P. 565.

men, moreover, here on earth, when praying to their intercessors, will beg them to tell them—asking the question in humility as though they were ignorant—*To what is your Beloved like? Qualis est dilectus tuus,*" etc.*

S. FORTUNATUS.

"Be mindful, O rich and gracious hearer, of thy client, the poor supplicant Fortunatus. . . . Intercede [O S. Martin] for his pardon, I beseech thee, O thou who hast won the crown. Rescue the sheep, O shepherd, lest it remain lame or outside the fold. Stretch forth thy hand now that thou art exalted, guide his steps, direct his sense, and weigh not with strict scrutiny his grievous excesses. . . . Be thyself at hand as a mediator between God and the guilty one. . . ." †

S. SOPHRONIUS.

"O pure Mother of God, heal the wounds of my soul, and the sufferings of my heart, and the errors of my mind, thou who art the only help of sinners, and the rampart of the besieged." ‡

"O thou who, since thou didst give birth to the King, rulest as Queen all creation (works), deliver me from the slavery of the crafty arch-enemy." §

"I will cry to thee night and day, and I shall be delivered; and, defended by thy power, O Virgin, shall pass over the walls of (earthly) pleasures, and be saved. . . . Thou hast heavenised our earthly mould (*οὐρανώσασα γεῶδες φύραμα*), by the dwelling of God in thee. O all-spotless One, rescue us from all dangers." ||

"Moses beheld thee of old, the burning bush on fire, O Virgin Mother of God: quench, then, the flames of my passions, snatch me from the fire of hell, and save me." ¶

"Illumine me with divine light, O Virgin Mother of God, thou who didst bring forth the Light. And dispel the darkness of my soul, that I may proclaim thee Blessed, whom all generations of men shall proclaim Blessed, even as thou didst thyself prophesy." **

S. Sophronius wrote many poems and hymns, and amongst others more than two hundred and thirty Odes on the Christian virtues, the last strophe of which is nearly always an invocation of the Blessed Virgin.††

EARLY LITURGIES.

"Let us commemorate our all-holy, pure, most glorious Blessed Lady, Mother of God, and ever-Virgin Mary, and all the Saints and Just, that we may all find mercy through their prayers and intercessions." ‡‡

* *Super Cantic. Cantic.* vi. 8, 9, Tom. 79, p. 521.
† *De Vita S. Martini, vv.* 595-603, Patr. Lat. Tom. 88, p. 422.
‡ *Trodium*, Patr. Gr. Tom. 87, p. 3841. § *Ib.* p. 3844.
|| *Ib.* p. 3845. ¶ *Ib.* p. 3854. ** *Ib.* p. 3866.
†† See *Spicilegium Roman.* Tom. 4, pp. 126-225.
‡‡ *The divine Liturgy of James*, Ante-Nicene Christian Library, vol. xxiv. p. 23.

"O Mother of Our Lord Jesus Christ, beseech for me the Only-begotten Son, who was born of thee, to forgive me my offences and my sins, and to accept from my feeble and sinful hands this sacrifice which my weakness offers upon this altar, through thy intercession for me, O holy Mother." *

S. ASTERIUS OF AMASEA.

"Thus fathers or mothers will take a sick child in their arms, neglecting medicine and physicians, and fly to an assistance unknown to art; and coming to one of the martyrs, will prefer their prayer to the Lord through him—thus addressing their mediator: 'Thou who hast suffered for Christ intercede for this suffering and disease. Thou who hast power (παῤῥησίαν, freedom of speech) with God, use thy intercession for thy fellow-servants. For although thou hast left this life, at least thou knowest the sufferings of humanity. Thou too hast invoked the martyrs, before thou wast a martyr. Seeking thou hast then received; now that thou hast, bestow upon us. By thy blood may we be healed, as the world is by that of Christ.' Another about to be married, invokes the blessings of the martyrs on his nuptial chamber. No one undertaking a voyage sets sail before he has invoked the Lord of the sea through the martyrs. . . .

"For as our prayers are not sufficient to propitiate God in a time of necessity and distress, we fly for succour to those of our fellow-servants who are beloved of God, that they by their own merits may remedy our delinquencies. What fault, then, is there [he is replying to pagan and heretical objectors] if we desire to please God by honouring the martyrs? What harm if we fly for succour to them as our patrons? . . ." †

"Let us then pray to God, but let us also invoke the martyrs, that they would obtain from our common Lord, that the spirit of repentance may be granted to those who are captive to heretical pravity, that all dissensions being destroyed, we may join together in fraternal unity, in Christ Jesus our Lord, to whom be glory throughout all ages." ‡

S. EUCHERIUS.

"The worship of native martyrs and the honour of our especial patrons both inspire peculiar joy, and require a particular devotion. For if it be our duty so diligently to honour foreign triumphs, as by our service to render our own what in place is distant, how much more earnestly should we not exhibit our fervent love and service on the festival of those to whom religion, the Church, and the country owe manifold devotion, honour and affection. For as we are their kinsmen by birth, by means of one parent, so let us vindicate the privilege of duty and grace towards them, that we may deserve to enjoy citizenship with them in heaven, whose fellow-citizens we rejoice in being upon earth. . . . And doubtless more dear and grateful will it be to the

* *The Liturgy of the Blessed Apostles*, composed by SS. Adæus and Maris, Teachers of the Easterns. *Ib.* p. 79.

† Opuscula, p. 192, Ed. Combefis.

‡ *Ib.* p. 208. See also *Homil. in S. Phocam*, Patron of the mariners, preached in his church on his festival, in which S. Asterius greatly commends their devotion to the Saint.

blessed martyrs if they be worshipped with fervent affection where they suffered their bitter passion: if there the sacrifice of prayer be offered to them where they fell a sacrifice to God; if there posterity offer vows to them where savage cruelty shed their blood." *

* Bibl. Man. Patrum, Tom. vi. p. 669. See the Article, in the *Dublin Review*, June, 1844, entitled, *Veneration of the Saints in the Early Church*, where passages are quoted, amongst others, from S. Gregory Nazianzen, Serm. iii. *Contr. Julian. Apost.* Tom. i. p. 77, Ed. Combefis.; S. Chrysostom, Tom. ii. p. 699, Ed. Ben.; *Hom. in S. Drosidem, V.; Ibid.* p. 694; S. Basil, *Epist.* v. p. 46; S. Gregory of Nyssa, Orat. iii. *De XL. Martyribus*, Tom. ii. p. 213, Ed. Sylburg.; S. Paulinus of Nola, p. 377, Ed. Verona; S. Damasus, Opera, p. 230; *The Acts of S. Maximus*, m. 250, in Ruinart or the Bollandists; S. Vigilius, Bishop of Trent, *Letters to S. Simplician of Milan, and to S. Chrysostom*, Bibl. Patr. Tom. viii. p. 203 *sq.*, Tom. xii. pp. 330-335; S. Victricius of Rouen, *De Laude Sanctorum*, Galland. Bibl. Patr. Tom. ix. pp. 232, 3; S. Gregory of Tours, *De Gloria Martyrum*, passim.

CHAPTER VIII.

EXAMPLES OF DEVOTION TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN AND THE SAINTS—OF INVOKING THEM—AND OF MIRACLES AND GRACES OBTAINED THROUGH THEIR INTERCESSION.

1. THE BURIAL OF S. PETER OF ALEXANDRIA.

"When the chief men of the city beheld the laudable importunity of the multitude, who were busied in dividing his sacred spoils [that is, of the martyred Peter, Bishop of Alexandria], to keep them as relics, they wrapt him up the tighter in the skins and linen sheets. For the most holy minister of God was always clothed in sacerdotal vestments of a white colour—that is, with the tunic, the kolobion, and the omophorion. Then there arose among them no small contention. For some were for carrying the most sacred limbs to the church which he had himself built, and where he now rests, but others were endeavouring to carry him to the Sanctuary of the Evangelist [S. Mark], where he attained the goal of martyrdom. And as neither party would yield to the other, they began to turn their religious observance into a wrangling and a fight. Meanwhile a spirited body of officers from amongst those engaged in the public transport-service seeing what had happened—for they were near the sea—got ready a boat, and seizing suddenly upon the sacred relics, placed them in it; and scaling the Pharos from behind, by a quarter which bears the name of Leucado, they came to the church of the most blessed Mother of God and ever-Virgin Mary, which as we began to say, he had constructed in the western quarter in a suburb, for a cemetery of the Martyrs." *

2. S. POTAMIÆNA.

Eusebius has preserved the following narrative from early records :—

* *The genuine Acts of Peter, Bishop of Alexandria and Martyr*, Ante-Nicene Christian Library, vol. xiv. p. 287.

The Virgin S. Potamiæna, who probably was a disciple of Origen, after having endured with great fortitude many horrible tortures for the faith of Christ, "immediately on receiving the sentence of condemnation was led away to death by Basilides, one of the officers of the army. But when the multitude attempted to assail and insult her with abusive language, he kept them off and restrained their insolence, showing her the greatest compassion and kindness. Seeing the man's sympathy, she exhorted him to be of good cheer, for that after she was gone, she would intercede for him with her Lord, and it would not be long before she would reward him for his kind deeds towards her. Saying this she nobly sustained the issue: having boiling pitch poured over different parts of her body, gradually by little and little, from her feet up to the crown of her head. Such then was the conflict this noble Virgin endured. But not long after, Basilides . . . declared that he was a Christian . . . was taken before the judge, and committed to prison. Now when some of the brethren came to see him, and inquired the cause of his sudden and singular resolve, he is said to have declared that Potamiæna for the three days after her martyrdom stood before him at night, and placed a crown upon his head, saying that she had entreated the Lord for him, and obtained her prayer, and that ere long she would take him with her. On this the brethren gave him the seal in the Lord;* and bearing a noble testimony, he was beheaded. Many others also of those at Alexandria are recorded to have promptly attached themselves to the faith of Christ in those days; and this by reason of Potamiæna, who appeared in dreams, and exhorted many to embrace the divine word." †

3. THE APPARITION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN AND S. JOHN THE EVANGELIST TO S. GREGORY THAUMATURGUS.

S. Gregory of Nyssa in his life of S. Gregory Thaumaturgus narrates the following story:—

"Gregory being thus constrained to bear the yoke of the episcopate, after having gone through all the prescribed ceremonies, asked of him who had assigned to him the priesthood a brief space of time for obtaining a more exact knowledge of the mystery of the faith. For deeming that he ought, according

* That is Baptism, and perhaps also Confirmation, and Holy Communion.
† *Eccl. Hist.* B. vi. ch. v.

to the Apostle's words, no longer to give in to flesh and blood,* he sought from God the manifestation of things hidden; since he had not courage to preach the word before the truth was revealed to him by some such manifestation. Now as he was one whole night long pondering on the word of faith, and bringing up all sorts of reasonings—for there were at that time, too, some who sought to adulterate the orthodox teaching, and often made the truth ambiguous even to the learned and prudent through plausible arguments—whilst, I say, he was thus lying awake thinking anxiously about the truth, there appeared to him one in human shape, of aged mien, and of sacred character, by the form and arrangement of his garb; showing marks of great virtue by the grace of his countenance and his whole bearing. Gregory, amazed at the vision, was about to rise from his bed, and to ask him who he was, and wherefore he had come. But the other calmed the trouble of his mind, speaking with gentle voice, and telling him that it was by divine command he appeared —on account of the questions that were exercising him—for the revealing to him the truth of the orthodox faith. At these words Gregory began to take courage, and to regard him with mingled feelings of joy and awe. The latter then stretched forth his hand, and, with fingers extended, pointed to Gregory at what was appearing on the other side. Gregory turning his eyes in the direction of the hand, beheld facing him another vision in woman's form more excellent than human. Struck again with awe he let fall his gaze, lost in bewilderment at the apparition, and unable to bear the sight of the vision—for what was most astonishing in the vision was, that though it was deep night, a light shone forth on him from those who appeared, as though some bright blazing torch were kindled. Whilst then his eyes could not bear the apparition, he heard them conversing together on the subject of his doubts, and thereby not only gained a true knowledge of the faith, but also learned their names, as they addressed each other by their respective titles. And thus he is said to have heard the person in woman's shape bid 'John the Evangelist' disclose to the young man the mystery of godliness: whilst he replied that he was ready to comply in this matter with the wish of 'the Mother of the Lord.' He then pronounced a formulary well-turned and complete. And so they vanished.

"This divine formula of Christian doctrine Gregory at once

* *Gal.* i. 16.

committed to writing, and, conformably to it, afterwards preached in the Church. He moreover left the same divinely-given teaching as a legacy to his successors. By it the people of that city have been instructed in the mysteries of the faith until the present day and have remained proof against all heretical pravity." Gregory proceeds to rehearse the words of the Creed thus given: "There is one God, Father of a Living Word," etc.*

4. S. JUSTINA INVOKES OUR BLESSED LADY.

S. Gregory Nazianzen, in a sermon preached at Constantinople (October A.D. 379), of which See he was then bishop, after extolling the virtues of S. Justina, V.M., and describing the temptations to which she was subjected through the unholy love she bore to Cyprian—relates how, at length abandoning all other helps, she had recourse to God as her Protector and Spouse, recalling to mind what He had done of old for Susanna and Thecla and so many others in peril. S. Gregory then thus continues his discourse:—

"Bringing to mind these and other [instances of divine protection], and supplicating the Virgin Mary to succour her, a virgin in danger, Justina fortifies herself with the medicine of fasting and sleeping on the bare ground, both that by impairing her beauty, as being a snare to her, she might remove the occasion of evil passion and temptation, and also render God propitious by means of her faith and humility."

S. Gregory then goes on to tell, in words of glowing eloquence how marvellously was the prayer of Justina answered, and her confidence recompensed, not only by herself obtaining a virgin martyr's crown, but also by the conversion, through her, of Cyprian to the Faith, and his being united with her in a glorious martyrdom (September 26, A.D. 304).†

5. MIRACLES WROUGHT BY THE BLESSED VIRGIN.

"After Theodosius had issued a rescript expressing his wish that all his subjects should follow the religion which Peter, the prince of the Apostles had handed down from the beginning, and Damasus the bishop of Rome, and Peter of Alexandria defended,

* S. Greg. Nyssen., *De Vita S. Greg. Thaum.*, Patr. Gr. Tom. 46, p. 910.

† S. Greg. Nazianz., *Orat.* xxiv. 11, *In laud. S. Cypriani*, Patr. Gr. T. 35, p. 1182. See the Lections in the Breviary for that day.

. . . he came to Constantinople. At that time Arians, whose leader was Demophilus, had still possession of the churches, whilst Gregory of Nazianzum presided over those who professed the Consubstantial Trinity. Now he was used to hold the ecclesiastical services in a poor little house which had been formed into a House of prayer by men of the same faith, both for himself and those who worshipped with him. In course of time this church quickly became renowned above the other churches of the metropolis, not only on account of the beauty and size of its structure, but also through succours of evidently divine apparitions there afforded. For a divine power there manifested, both in waking visions and also in dreams, came to the relief, over and over again, of many who were suffering under various diseases and accidents. It was believed that this was the holy Virgin Mother of God. For thus is she wont to appear. This same church is called *Anastasia*, as I think because the dogma of the Nicene Council, which had fallen and was, so to say, dead in Constantinople through the power of the heretics, was there raised up, and came to life again through the preaching of Gregory; or, as I have heard from some who say they can vouch for the truth, because, whilst the people were one day assembled there at divine worship, a woman who was pregnant fell down from the upper portico, and there died; but on prayer being made in common by all over her, she came again to life, and with the babe in her womb was saved. And so from this miracle the place obtained its name."*

6. THE STATUE OF CHRIST ERECTED BY THE HEMORRHOISSA AT PANEAS.

Sozomen narrates that Julian the Apostate, hearing of the statue of Christ at Paneas (Cæsarea Philippi), which had been erected long before by the woman cured of an issue of blood,† destroyed it, and set up one of himself in its place. This was not long afterwards struck by lightning, and so remained. The Christians then collected the fragments of Christ's statue, restored it, and replaced it in the Church, where, says Sozomen, it was still to be seen in his time. There grew, he relates, at the foot of the statue, a plant most potent for the cure of all diseases, that was unknown to medical men and scientists. He adds that the account is most probable, and gives other similar examples.‡

* Sozomen, *Hist. Eccl.* L. viii. c. v. Patr. Gr. T. 67, p. 1424.
† *Luke* viii. 43-47. ‡ *Hist. Eccl.* L. v. c. xxi.

7. MIRACLES OBTAINED THROUGH THE INVOCATION OF S. STEPHEN.

S. Augustine, preaching one day to an immense audience at Hippo on the Proto-martyr S. Stephen, was beginning to narrate a wonderful miracle that had recently occurred at Uzalis through the Martyr's intercession; when his discourse was suddenly interrupted by the instantaneous cure of a poor sick girl, whom the holy doctor had commended to the people's prayers and invocation of S. Stephen. At once prolonged shouts of thanksgiving and joy arose amongst the multitude, and the girl thus cured, was led into the apse of the Church in sight of the whole congregation. On silence being restored, S. Augustine was obliged to bring his sermon to a hasty conclusion.

The next day the Saint preached again, and after speaking of the miracle that had been wrought the day before, thus continued the narration that had been interrupted:—

"The following miracle we know took place at Uzalis, amongst many others which it is impossible to enumerate. A certain mother lost her suckling babe from sickness. The infant boy was a catechumen unbaptised. On seeing him taken away and irreparably lost, she began to weep for him more out of faith than as a mother. For she desired not the life of her child, save in the next world, and this she bewailed as now lost to her and perished. Filled with a feeling of confidence, she took her dead infant, ran to the shrine of the blessed martyr Stephen, and set to demand her child of him, saying, 'Holy Martyr, thou seest that I have no consolation left. For I cannot say that my son has gone before, since thou knowest that he is lost. Thou seest then why I lament. Restore my son that I may have him in the presence of thy Crowner.' As she was praying in these and such like words, and her tears were in a manner not asking, but as I have said, demanding; her son came to life again. And because she had said, 'Thou knowest why I seek him,' God was pleased to discover her true mind. Straightway she carried him to the priests. He was baptised, sanctified, anointed, the hand was laid on him: and when all the sacraments were completed, he was taken to heaven. Whilst she bore him to the grave, it was as though—seemingly from her countenance—she was not bearing him to the repose of the tomb, but to the bosom of the Martyr Stephen. The woman's faithful heart was proved. Where then God wrought so great a miracle through His Martyr, could

He not there cure these? And yet they have been brought hither to us. . . ." *

8. A MIRACULOUS CONVERSION THROUGH APPLICATION OF FLOWERS FROM S. STEPHEN'S ALTAR.

S. Augustine gives many other instances of miracles wrought by invoking the intercession of S. Stephen, or by the holy martyr's relics: one of which was "the conversion of a man of rank named Martial, whose daughter and son-in-law were Christians, but who was himself hostile to the faith. After many attempts to convince him, once, when he was sick, his son-in-law repaired to the shrine (memoriam) of S. Stephen, and there, after having prayed for his conversion with great fervour, took one of the flowers from the altar, and laid it on Martial's pillow whilst he was asleep. Before dawn he suddenly awoke, and called for baptism." †

9. A NEEDY TAILOR MIRACULOUSLY RELIEVED THROUGH INVOKING THE TWENTY MARTYRS.

"There was in this our town of Hippo an old man called Florentius, religious and poor, maintaining himself as a tailor. He lost his garment, and had not wherewithal to buy himself another. Whereupon he prayed with a loud voice to the Twenty Martyrs, whose memory is much honoured among us, that he might be clothed. Some mocking youths who chanced to be there laughed at him. . . . As he walked on in silence, he saw a large fish cast on the shore, which he took and sold for three hundred pence (follibus) to a certain cook named Catosus, a good Christian, telling him what had happened. The said cook, on cutting up the fish, found inside it a gold ring; and straightway, melted with compassion, and struck with awe, he restored it to Florentius, saying, See how the Twenty Martyrs have clothed you." ‡

10. THE BLESSED VIRGIN AND OTHER SAINTS APPEAR TO S. MARTIN ON HIS DEATH-BED.

"I tell you, said S. Martin—but I beg you not to mention it to any one—Agnes, Thecla, and Mary were with me. He then described to us the countenance and dress of each. But not only

* S. Augustin. *Serm.* 323 et 324, Patr. Lat. T. 38, pp. 1446, 7.
† *De Civ. Dei*, L. xxii. c. 8, n. 13. ‡ *Ib.* xx. n. 9.

that day, but frequently, he confessed, he was visited by them, and denied not that he had often seen the Apostles Peter and Paul." *

11. COMMUNION OF A LITTLE JEWISH BOY, AND HIS MIRACULOUS PRESERVATION FROM BEING BURNT TO DEATH BY THE BLESSED VIRGIN.

"I will not pass over what happened in the East for confirmation of the Catholic faith. A certain Jewish glass-worker's child who was at school with Christian boys, one day whilst at Mass in the basilica of the Blessed Virgin Mary, though a Jewish boy, went to receive with the other children the glorious Body and Blood of the Lord. After having received the holy Sacrament, he returned with gladness to his father's house. . . . Full of joy he told what he had received. But the father who hated Christ the Lord and His religion said, 'Since, forgetful of the religion of thy fathers, thou has communicated with those children; to avenge the injury done to the Law of Moses, thy father though I be, I will kill thee without mercy.' Then taking his child to the mouth of a burning furnace, he threw him in; and laying on more wood that it might burn the fiercer, he stood by. But that same mercy, which bathed of old the Three Hebrew Children, cast into the Chaldæan furnace, with the cloud of dew, failed not now. For it suffered not him either, as he was lying in the midst of the flames and heaps of live coals, to be any way injured. Now when the mother heard that the father had determined to burn to death their common child, she ran to save him. But on seeing the fire blazing out from the yawning mouth of the furnace with overpowering flame, she cast to the ground the ornament from off her head, and dishevelling her hair with woeful laments, she filled the whole neighbourhood with her cries. When then the Christians learnt what had happened, they all ran up together to the iniquitous sight, and after extricating the burning embers from the mouth of the furnace, they found the little boy lying down as though on a bed of the softest feathers. On his being taken out, they were all in marvel to find him unhurt; and the place was filled with their shouts, and in this way the whole people gave praise to the Lord. They clamoured together, too, to cast the author of the crime into those same flames. And on his being cast into the furnace, the fire so utterly consumed him,

* Sulpicius Severus, *Dialog.* ii. xiii., Patr. Lat. Tom. 20, p. 210.

that scarcely the least trace of his bones was left. Then the Christians asked the little fellow what sort of fire-shade (umbraculum) he had in the flames; and he said: 'The Lady—in that basilica where I received bread from the table, sitting in the chair, who bears in her bosom a little tiny infant—she it was who covered me with her mantle, that the fire might not devour me.' Hence there is no doubt at all, that the Blessed Mary appeared to him. The child then on being instructed in the Catholic faith, believed in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, and being washed together with his mother in the saving waters, was once more regenerated. By means of this example many Jews in that city were saved." *

12. OUR LADY'S WELL AT BETHLEHEM.

"At Bethlehem there is a large well whence the glorious Mary is said to have drawn water. Here a great miracle frequently appears to beholders; which is, that to such as are clean of heart, the same star appears that was seen by the Magi. When devout persons come and repose over the well, their heads are covered with a linen cloth. He then who is worthy sees the Star pass over the water from one side of the wall of the well to the other, just as stars are wont to pass over the vault of the heavens. And though many may be looking, it is seen by those only whose souls are in a more healthy state. I myself have seen some who affirmed that they saw it; and our own deacon lately reported that whilst he looked with five men it appeared only to two of them." †

13. THE ORPHAN BOY WHO PREFERRED OUR LADY'S PROTECTION TO A FATHER'S LEGACY.

We read in the Life of John the Almoner (Patriarch of Alexandria A.D. 606-616) of an orphan boy living in great poverty and distress, whose case was brought before the holy bishop by benevolent persons who interested themselves in the poor boy's behalf. "The boy's father, they said, was a very charitable man to the poor, and when making his will shortly before his death had thus spoken to his son: 'Here, my son, are ten pounds in gold. Now dost thou wish that I should leave them to thee, or

* S. Gregory of Tours, *Miraculorum Lib.* i. cap. x., Patr. Lat. Tom. 71, p. 7114.

† *Ibid.* cap. 1, p, 707.

dost thou wish that my Lady the Mother of God should be thy guardian and provider?' On the boy's making choice of the holy Mother of God, the dying man bade all that he had to be given to the poor, whilst his son was not left a farthing. He is now, they continued to plead, in a state of very great destitution; but does not leave the house of Our Lady night or day. The holy patriarch at once took secret and extraordinary means for the orphan's relief, had him brought to him, and welcomed him as though he were his own son. In this way then," adds the biographer, "did he enrich him, and placed him in charge of a matron in Alexandria, giving him a home, and all things whereof he had need; being anxious to show clearly that the Lord forsaketh not them that trust in Him." *

14. INVOCATION OF S. EUPHROSYNA.

"The Abbot cried out saying, Euphrosyna, spouse of Christ and daughter of the Saints, forget not thy fellow-servant and the monastery, but pray for us to Our Lord Jesus Christ, that He will make us, by striving manfully, arrive at the port of salvation, and have our portion with Him and His Saints." †

15. A STRANGE ACCOUNT OF A CRIMINAL HAVING RECOURSE TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN, AND REJECTED BY HER.

Evagrius records that, "a man named Anatolius at Antioch, who had risen from the lowest origin to senatorial rank, was guilty of sorcery, sacrificing to idols, sedition, and other great crimes. The Emperor Tiberius ordered him and those who had taken part with him to be sent for trial to Constantinople. Anatolius on hearing this ran at once to a picture of the Deipara, which was hanging by a cord in the prison, presenting himself before it with his arms folded behind his back, in the attitude of an imploring suppliant. But she, detesting and accusing him reproachfully as an evil man and a hater of God, turned away her face wholly from him—a prodigy to make one shudder

* *Judith* vi. 15. *Vita S. Joann. Eleemos.*, cap. xxxiii., Patr. Lat. T. 73, p. 367. The Author of this Life was Leontius, Bishop of Neapolis Cyprorum, who lived in the reign of the Emperor Maurice. Several of his works are enumerated in the VII. General Council, Act IV. Sigebert writes: "Anastasius S. R. E. Bibliothecarius translated the Life of John the Almoner at the command of Pope Nicholas, from the Greek of Bishop Leontius."

† *Vita S. Euphrosynæ*, *De Vitis Patr.* L. T. Patr. Lat. Tom. 73, p. 651. Theodoret in his Lives of various Fathers continually invokes their intercession. See passim *Vitæ Patrum*, L. ix. *Ib.* Tom. 74.

(θαῦμα φρικώδες), and worthy of everlasting remembrance. This was related to have been witnessed both by all the prisoners, and also by all the officials who had charge of Anatolius and his companions. The Mother of God appeared also, in waking vision, to some of the faithful, inciting them against the miscreant, saying that Anatolius had treated her Son with insult." The Emperor and Eutyches Bishop of Constantinople, desiring not to condemn the criminals to death, sentenced them to exile. At this the people of Constantinople were roused to great indignation, and took the law in their own hands. Those who had joined Anatolius were burnt alive; and he was thrown to the wild beasts in the amphitheatre, where his mangled corpse was set upon a pole. "Nor," continues the historian, "did his punishment end with his life. What was never before seen—the wolves dragged down his vile body, and divided it amongst themselves to devour. There was, moreover, one with us (at Antioch) who said that before all this happened, he saw in sleep, how the sentence against Anatolius and his comrades was passed by the people. And a certain high personage presiding over the imperial household, who very strongly defended Anatolius, said that the Mother of God appeared to him, asking him, 'how long was he going to side with Anatolius who thus had insulted both herself and her Son.'"*

16. OUR LADY INVITES THE LITTLE MUSA TO HER SERVICE, AND CALLS HER TO HEAVEN AT DEATH.

"Nor do I pass over in silence what the same servant of God Probus used to relate about his sister, a little girl named Musa; how that one night the holy Mother of God and ever-Virgin Mary appeared to her in a vision, and showed her some young girls of her own age in white garments. And as Musa was wishing to be with them, yet ventured not to join them, she was asked, through the voice of the Blessed Mary, whether she desired to be with them and to live in her service. And when the little girl said to Our Lady, 'I do wish it,' she at once received a command from her, not any more to do anything frivolous and childish, and to abstain from laughter and jokes; and was told for certain, that she would enter into the Blessed Virgin's service, to be of the number of the virgins she had seen, on the thirtieth day. After

* *Hist. Eccl.* L. V. c. 18, Patr. Gr. Tom. 76, p. 2829, Baron. *Annal.* ad ann. 580.

this vision the girl Musa became changed in her whole conduct, and put from her all childish levity by great efforts of gravity. Now when her parents, marvelling at her change, questioned her on the matter, she told them what the Mother of God had enjoined on her, and the day she was to go to her service. Then after the twenty-fifth day she was taken with fever. And on the thirtieth day, when the hour of her departure drew nigh, she beheld the same Blessed Mother of God with the young girls whom she had seen in the vision, come to her. On Our Lady now calling her, she began to answer, and, with her eyes modestly cast down and very gentle voice, to cry: 'Behold, Lady, I come. Now, Lady, I come.' And with these words, she gave up the ghost, and went forth from a virgin body to dwell with the holy virgins." *

17. THE PROCESSION AT ROME IN HONOUR OF OUR BLESSED LADY, DURING THE PLAGUE IN THE TIME OF S. GREGORY THE GREAT.

When the plague was raging in Rome A.D. 590, S. Gregory the Great, who was then only a Deacon, caused solemn public processions to be made to the Basilicas of our Blessed Lady, S. Peter, and SS. Cosmas and Damian. "The ancient Ritual books record," says Baronius, "that in the last Litanies the procession was made to the Basilica of Peter, prince of the Apostles, and that the holy picture of the Mother of God was borne by the same Gregory with great veneration. It is related to have been the one [according to tradition, painted by S. Luke] that had its place until that time in the Basilica of *S. Maria ad Præsepe*, and was greatly frequented by the people, who honoured it with much devotion. That it was then carried in the procession is affirmed in the *Ordo Romanus*, of which several copies are preserved in the Vatican Library." †

"It was arranged," writes S. Gregory of Tours, "that going forth with prayers and tears from the different churches we should meet together at the basilica of the Blessed Mary ever-Virgin Mother of our Lord God Jesus Christ, in order that there for a longer time supplicating the Lord with tears and sighs, we might avail to merit pardon for our sins." ‡

* S. Greg. Magn., *Dialogor. Lib.* iv. c. 17, Patr. Gr. T. 77, p. 348.

† Baron. *Annal.* ad Ann. 590, nn. 12-19. See Migne's Patr. Lat. Tom. 75, p. 280, and on S. Gregory's teaching concerning holy Images, p. 418 *sq.*

‡ S. Greg. Turon., *Historia Francor.* Lib. x. 1, *Ib.* Tom. 71.

"The Procession was advancing in the direction of S. Peter's; and as the holy Picture, followed by the Pontiff, was carried along, the atmosphere became pure and free from pestilence. Having reached the bridge which joins the City with the Vatican, a choir of Angels was heard singing above the Picture, and saying: 'Rejoice, O Queen of heaven, alleluia! for He whom thou deservedst to bear, alleluia! hath risen, as He said, alleluia!' As soon as the heavenly music ceased, the saintly Pontiff took courage, and added these words to those of the Angels: 'Pray to God for us, alleluia!' Thus was composed the Paschal Anthem to our Lady. Raising his eyes to heaven, Gregory saw the destroying Angel standing on the top of the Mole of Hadrian, and sheathing his sword. In memory of this apparition, the Mole was called the *Castle of Sant' Angelo*, and on the dome was placed an immense statue representing an Angel holding his sword in the scabbard." *

18. USE OF IMAGES AND PICTURES.

It is certain that with the preaching of the Holy Gospel the English received the use of holy pictures, according to the ancient usage of the Catholic Church, from the fact of S. Augustine's bringing with him into England the image of our Saviour. S. Bede says that S. Augustine and his companions brought with them the silver Cross for a standard and a picture of our Lord and Saviour painted on a tablet.

Procopius Gazæus witnesses nearly a century before to the prevalence of sacred images amongst Christians, in saying, "They used to have graven at the prows of their vessels images of gods, just as now they have of holy Martyrs." †

19. THE CONVERSION OF A NESTORIAN MONK TO THE RIGHT FAITH CONCERNING THE BLESSED VIRGIN, TRUE MOTHER OF GOD.

"There dwelt in the Laura of Calamon, on the sacred Jordan a certain old man, Cyriacus by name, of great merit before God. To him came a stranger brother from the region of Dora, named Theophanes, to ask the aged man's advice respecting temptations against purity. The old man began to encourage and exhort him with discourse concerning temperance and chastity. The brother,

* Gueranger, *The Liturgical Year, Paschal Time*, vol. i. p. 111.
† *Comment. in Isa.* P. L. Tom. 87, p. 2053.

thereby greatly edified and strengthened, said to the old man: 'Verily, my father, were it not that in my own country I communicate with the Nestorians, I would remain with thee.' Now when the aged man heard the name of Nestorians, distressed for the brother's ruin, he began to rebuke him, and entreated him to withdraw from that most evil and baneful heresy, and to seek admission into the Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church, telling him at the same time that there is no other hope of salvation, except to think and believe rightly—what indeed is the truth—that the holy Virgin Mary is the Mother of God.

"'But, my father and master,' said the brother, 'surely this is what all heretics say, "Unless thou communicatest with us, thou wilt not be saved." What then to do, miserable that I am, I know not. Do thou therefore beseech the Lord to make me know for certain what is the true faith.' At hearing the brother's words, the old man was full of joy, and said to him: 'Come and sit in the cave with me, and have entire hope in God, for His goodness will discover to thee what is the true faith.' Then leaving the brother in his own cave, Cyriacus went forth nigh to the Dead Sea to pray to God for him.

"Now about the ninth hour the day following, the brother beheld one standing before him of terrible mien, who said: 'Come, and see the truth.' And taking him, he led him to a darksome and fetid place, where were fire and flames; and in these flames he saw Nestorius, Eutyches, and certain others. And he who had appeared to him said: 'This place is prepared for heretics and blasphemers, and for those who follow their teachings. If then this place pleaseth thee, continue in thy present doctrine: but if thou wishest not to make trial of this punishment, join thyself to the Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church which that old man teaches thee. For I tell thee, that though a man should practise all virtues, and yet not believe rightly, he will have to suffer in this place.' At these words the brother came to himself, and related to Cyriacus on his return all that he had seen, and then joined the communion of the Holy Catholic Church. Theophanes remained with the old man, and after spending four years in his company slept in peace." *

* The *Pratum Spirituale* of John Moschus, cap. xxvi. Patr. Græc. Tom. 87, p. 2872. This work was written in Greek by John Moschus, who accompanied S. Sophronius, afterwards patriarch of Jerusalem, on a journey in which he visited the principal monasteries of the East about the year 578. See the proofs of its genuineness and authenticity, *Prolegomenon* xii., *In Vitas Patrum*, Patr. Lat. Tom. 73, p. 44 *sq.*

20. SIMILAR CONVERSION OF A STYLITE.

"It is narrated that Ephrem, Patriarch of Antioch, on hearing of a certain pillared monk (stylites) in the region of Hierapolis, who was joined to the heresy of Severus, went to convert him. The Patriarch accepted the trial of fire which the monk had proposed as the test of orthodoxy. But when all was ready, the latter would not stand to his agreement. Then the Patriarch taking off the stole (*ὠμοφόριον*) wherewith he was vested, and drawing near to the fire, prayed saying: 'O Lord Jesus Christ, our God, who for our sake didst verily deign to become flesh of Our Lady and Mistress (*Δεσποίνης*), the holy Mother of God and ever-Virgin Mary, show to us the truth.' The prayer ended, he cast his stole into the midst of the flames. Now when the fire had lasted for about three hours, and the wood was by that time burnt away, they brought out the stole perfect and entire, without any marks of fire being found on it. Thereupon the Stylite seeing what had happened, and certified of the truth, anathematised Severus and his heresy, and joining the Holy Catholic Church, received communion from the hands of the holy Ephrem, and gave glory to God." *

21. THE DEVIL TEMPTS A CERTAIN SOLITARY TO GIVE OVER WORSHIPPING AN IMAGE OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN.

"The Abbot Theodore Æliotes was wont to speak of a certain very great athlete, who lived as a recluse on the Mount of Olives, and was assailed by the spirit of impurity. Now one day being very violently tempted, the old man began to wail forth, and to say to the devil: 'How long before thou leavest me alone? Get thee now gone from me, thou who hast grown old with me.' Then the devil appeared visibly to him and said: 'Swear to me that thou wilt tell no one what I am going to say to thee, and I will assail thee no longer.' On this the old man swore, saying: 'By Him who dwelleth on high I will tell no one what thou shalt say to me.' Then said the devil to him: 'Cease to worship (Noli adorare) this image, and I will no more assail thee.' Now the image was one of Our Lady, the holy Mary Mother of God, bearing in her arms Our Lord Jesus Christ. The recluse said to the devil: 'Give me a little time to think it over.' The next day he made it known to the Abbot Theodore Æliotes—who was then

* The *Pratum Spirituale* of John Moschus, cap. xxxvi. p. 2884.

dwelling in the Laura of Pharan—and told him all. The aged man said to the recluse: 'In sooth, Sir Abbot, thou hast been befooled, in swearing to the devil: nevertheless, thou hast done well to make it known. For it would be better for thee to go into every single brothel in the city, than to refuse to adore God, and Our Lord Jesus Christ, together with His Mother.' And then Theodore left the recluse confirmed and strengthened by many words.

"Hereupon the devil appeared again to the recluse, saying: 'What is all this, thou wretched old man? Didst thou not swear to me that thou wouldst tell it to no one? Why then didst thou reveal it to him who came to thee? I tell thee that thou wilt be condemned as a perjurer at the day of judgment.' The recluse answered saying: 'I know, indeed, that I swore, and have committed perjury: true it is that I have perjured my Lord and Creator. But thee I will not obey. For of thee will be exacted, as author both of the evil counsel and perjury, their inevitable pains.'" *

22. THE BLESSED VIRGIN'S REPROACH TO A MONK WHO HAD IN HIS CELL TWO HERETICAL TREATISES OF NESTORIUS.

"We came to the Abbot Cyriacus, a priest of the Laura of Calamon near the holy Jordan, who told us as follows: 'One day I saw in sleep a woman of honourable mien, clad in purple, and with her two men, themselves too of venerable garb and noble aspect. Now I thought this woman to be Our Lady, the holy Mother of God, and the two men who were with her, S. John the Theologian and S. John the Baptist. So going forth from my cell, I begged them to enter it, and to pray therein. But to this she did not consent. I therefore continued praying and beseeching the more, saying: "Let not, I entreat, the humble be turned away in confusion;" † and many such like words. When then she saw me go on praying, and repeating the same request she answered me in a tone of severity, saying: "Thou hast my enemy within thy cell, and wouldst thou that I should enter it?" And having so said she departed.

"'On awaking I began to be troubled, and to think whether I had committed some sin against her in my heart; for there was no one else in my cell but myself alone. But the more I examined

* The *Pratum Spirituale* of John Moschus, cap. xlv. p. 2900.

† *Ps.* lxxiii. 21.

myself, did I find nought wherein I had sinned against her. When then I saw myself absorbed with over-sorrow, I rose and took a book to read, that by such reading I might chase away my grief together with these thoughts. Now I had borrowed this same book from the blessed Isychius, priest of the Church of Jerusalem. On turning over the book I found two treatises of the impious Nestorius written at the end of the volume, and soon I discovered that it was he who was the enemy of our holy Lady, the Mother of God and ever-Virgin Mary. Straightway rising I went off and returned the book to him who had lent it to me, saying to him: "Take back your book, for verily I have got from it more harm than good." And on his inquiring of me the reason of this harm, I gave him a full account of the whole matter. At this, inflamed with zeal for God, he forthwith cut out the two treatises of Nestorius from the volume and cast them on the fire, saying: "The enemy of our holy Lady, Mother of God and ever-Virgin Mary, shall not remain in my cell."'"*

23. OUR LADY'S MERCIFUL PUNISHMENT OF THE ACTOR WHO HAD REPEATEDLY BLASPHEMED HER.

"Heliopolis is a town of Phœnicia of Lebanon, where was a certain actor, by name Gaianus, who by blaspheming in the theatre the holy Mother of God, offered to the people a spectacle of blasphemy. Now the holy Mother of God appeared to him in sleep, and said: 'What evil have I done thee, that thou shouldst speak evil of and blaspheme me before so great a multitude?' After the vision he not only did not amend, but even blasphemed the more. Again, then the holy Mother of God appeared to him, rebuking him and saying: 'Do not, I beg, do not thus injure thy soul.' This notwithstanding, he went on blaspheming her yet worse. She therefore appeared to him a third time repeating the same words. Then as he did not amend, but went on adding to his blasphemies, she appeared to him at mid-day whilst asleep, and without saying anything, made a mark with her finger alone on his hands and feet. On awakening he found himself maimed of hands and feet. And so the unhappy man, as he lay now a useless trunk, confessed to all for what cause and how it was he thus suffered, and that on account of his blasphemies he had been mercifully punished."†

* The *Pratum Spirituale* of John Moschus, cap. xlvi. p. 2900.

† *Ib.* c. xlvii. p. 2901.

24. OUR LADY WILL NOT ALLOW A CERTAIN WOMAN WHO BELONGED TO A HERETICAL SECT TO VENERATE THE HOLY SEPULCHRE, UNTIL SHE WAS RECONCILED TO THE CHURCH.

"Anastasius a priest, and the guardian of the ornaments of the holy Resurrection of God and Our Lord Jesus Christ, related to us that Cosmiana the wife of the patrician Germanus, came there one holy Sunday night with the intention of adoring alone by herself, the sacred and life-giving Sepulchre of Our Lord Jesus Christ. And as she drew nigh to the gate of the Sacrarium, there appeared to her visibly Our Lady the holy Mother of God with other women also. Our Lady spoke to her, saying: 'How is it that not being one of ours, thou presumest to enter here?' And she kept her off, saying, 'Thou art not one of ours.' For she belonged to the heresy of the Acephalite Severus. Cosmiana meanwhile was begging hard that she might be allowed to go in. But the holy Mother of God answered her saying, 'Believe me, woman, thou shalt not enter in here, unless thou wilt communicate with us.' When then she understood that, because she was a heretic, she was hindered from going in, and that unless she joined the Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church, she would not be allowed to enter, she straightway sent for the Deacon, and on his coming with the holy Chalice, she received the sacred Body and the precious Blood of the great God and Our Saviour Jesus Christ. And then without any hindrance she was held worthy to adore the holy and venerable Sepulchre of the Lord Jesus Christ." *

25. OUR LADY SAVES FROM GREAT PERIL THE WIFE AND LITTLE DAUGHTER OF A PIOUS MERCHANT, WHO HAD ENTRUSTED THEM TO HER PROTECTION DURING HIS ABSENCE FROM HOME.

"The same Abbot Palladius, when we came to him on another occasion, related to us much as follows: There was, he said, in Alexandria a certain man of the true faith, very religious and charitable, used, moreover, to show much hospitality to monks. His wife, too, was very humble, and fasted daily. Now they had a little daughter about six years of age. One day this pious man set out for Constantinople, for he was a merchant. Leaving, then, his wife and the little girl, and one servant at home, he

* The *Pratum Spirituale* of John Moschus, cap. xlix. p. 2993.

departed to go on board the vessel. But as he was on his way to the ship, his wife said to him: 'To whom, Sir, dost thou leave us in care?' Her husband answered: 'To Our Lady the holy Mother of God.' Now one day as the wife was sitting at her work, and the little girl with her, the servant man, through a diabolical suggestion, formed the purpose of killing his mistress and her daughter, and of making off with everything that they had. So, taking a knife from the kitchen, he went to the dining-room where the two were. But on coming to the door he was struck with blindness, so that he was unable either to enter the dining-room, or to return to the kitchen. After standing fixed to the spot for nearly an hour trying in vain to go in, he began to call his mistress saying: 'Come here.' She, wondering why, as he was just at the door, he did not come in, but kept on calling, said to him: 'No, come here yourself.' For she knew not that he was struck blind. But the servant began to adjure her to come to where he was: whilst she swore that she would not go. Then he said to her: 'At least send the little girl.' But she refused saying: 'If you want anything, come yourself.' The servant then seeing that he could do nothing, stabbed himself with the knife and fell to the ground. When his mistress saw what he had done, she cried out loudly, and the neighbours at once ran up. Some of the police also came in, and finding the servant still alive, they got information from him of the whole matter; and glorified the Lord who had shown forth marvels, and had thus saved the mother and daughter." *

26. HOW WHEN A CERTAIN SOLITARY WAS ABSENT ON PIOUS PILGRIMAGES, THE BLESSED VIRGIN ALWAYS KEPT FROM GOING OUT, THE CANDLE WHICH HE HAD BURNING BEFORE HER PICTURE IN HIS CELL.

"The most holy Dionysius priest of the holy Church of the Ascalonites and guardian of the sacred vessels, related to us the following about the Abbot John an anchorite: He was one truly great in his generation, and, for commendation of his high merits before God, Dionysius narrated this miracle respecting him. The old man, said he, dwelt in a cave near the village called Sochus, about twenty miles from Jerusalem. Now the solitary had in his cave a Picture of our Immaculate Queen (Δεσποίνης), the Mother of God and ever-Virgin Mary, bearing in her arms Jesus Christ

* The *Pratum Spirituale* of John Moschus, cap. lxxxv. p. 2927.

Our Lord and Saviour. As often then as he desired to go to any place, or through the wide desert, or to Jerusalem to adore the holy Cross and the Sacred Places, or to Mount Sinai for the sake of prayer, or to the Martyrs distant at many and long intervals from Jerusalem (for the aged man was wondrously given to veneration of the Martyrs, and would go at one time to Ephesus to S. John, at another to Euchaita to S. Theodore, then to S. Thecla at Seleucia of Isauria, or to S. Sergius at Saraphæ, and now to this Saint, and now to that), he would set a fresh candle and light it—for such was his wont—and standing to pray, and beseeching God to direct his journey, he would say to Our Lady, looking intently at her Picture: 'Do thou, our holy Lady, Mother of God, since I am going a long journey of many days, thyself take care of thy candle, and keep it from going out, according to my intention: for I am undertaking a journey in company of thy help.' After speaking thus to the Picture, he went forth; and the destined journey being over, returned, sometimes after a month, often, too, after two or three months, sometimes after five or six; and he then found the candle whole and burning, as he had left it when he started for his journey. And never did he see it gone out of itself, whether on rising from sleep, or on returning from a pilgrimage, or on coming back to his cave from the desert." *

27. THE CONVERSION OF MARY OF EGYPT THROUGH INVOKING OUR BLESSED LADY.

S. Mary of Egypt relates how, when she reached the porch of the Church in which the Holy Cross was being venerated at Jerusalem, "an invisible force prevented her from entering the Church. Standing in a corner of the porch, she was struck with intense sorrow at the remembrance of her sins; which caused her to weep much, sigh and strike her breast. Then raising her eyes, she saw above her an Image of the holy Mother of God, and looking at it with great earnestness, this was her prayer: 'O Lady Virgin, who didst give birth to God according to the flesh. I know that it is not becoming nor fit that I who am so loathsome should adore thy Image, or gaze on it with these eyes of mine so foully polluted, since thou art known as that Virgin and chaste one, who hast both body and soul immaculate. It is just that I, a wanton, should be spurned and rejected by thy most

* The *Pratum Spirituale* of John Moschus, c. clxxx. p. 3052.

pure cleanliness of chastity. Yet since, as I have heard, this God—whose worthy Mother thou art—became Man, that He might call sinners to penance; do thou help me, who am all alone and helpless; receive my confession, and permit me to enter the Church, that I be not debarred from the sight of that most precious Wood whereto was nailed the God-Man, whom thou a Virgin didst thyself conceive and bring forth; and who gave His own Blood for my redemption. Command, O Lady, for me, too, all-unworthy, for sake of devotion to the divine Cross, that the door be opened; and—taking thee all-worthy of trust for surety—I promise most faithfully to Christ thy Son, that never more will I defile my flesh with impurity; but at once after seeing, O holy Virgin, the Cross of thy Son, I will renounce the world and its acts, and all things that are in it, and will go forthwith whithersoever thou, as my surety, shalt lead me.'

"Thus saying, and taking some heart, kindling with the warmth of faith, and presuming on the bowels of pity of the Mother of God, I moved from the spot, where I stood praying, and rejoined those who were going in. And now there was no one any longer to keep me back, nor to hinder my approach to the entrance-doors of the Church; and so I found myself within the holy of holies, and was counted worthy to adore the mystery of the life-giving wood of the Cross. . . . Then casting myself down before it on the ground, and kissing the holy pavement there, I went out. Then hastening to her who had become bail for me, I came to the place where the deed of suretyship had been drawn up, and kneeling before the face of the holy Virgin Mother of God, I prayed to her in these words: 'Thou hast, indeed, O most gracious Lady, ever shown forth thy merciful goodness; thou didst not reject an unworthy supplication. I have seen the glory, which as sinners we justly do not see, the glory of Almighty God Who through thee accepts the repentance of sinners. What more can I, sinful wretch, bring to mind, or tell forth? Now it is time for me to fulfil what I promised, in full reliance on thy love. Now, whither it pleases thee, direct me. Be thou to me guide of salvation, and mistress of truth, going before me in the way that leads to penance.' Thus saying I heard the voice of one calling me from afar: 'If thou wilt cross the Jordan, thou shalt find good repose.' I then on hearing this voice, and believing that it came for me, called out with tears, and looking at the Image of God's Mother, cried aloud: 'Lady, Lady, Queen of the whole world, by whom salvation came to

mankind, do not abandon me.' And thus saying, I went forth from the porch of the Church, and walked on with haste. . . ."

S. Mary of Egypt goes on to say, how in the desert she was continually assailed by many and grievous temptations for seventeen years; and thus continues: "But weeping and striking my breast I would recall myself to the memory of the pact of suretyship that I had made when going forth on this solitude. And I would go again in thought before the Image of the Mother of God, who had received me to her trust; and before her, I implored her to chase from me those thoughts that were afflicting my most miserable soul. Then, as I wept overmuch and in sorrow, and beat manfully my breast, I was wont to see a light all around, and shining about me, whereupon a certain stable serenity came upon me. . . . When then some evil thought arose in my mind, I would prostrate myself on the ground, which I bathed with my tears, trusting that she, who had become my surety, was really present at my side. . . . For I did not rise from the earth until that most sweet sentiment illumined me, as was its wont, and chased away the thoughts that troubled me. Thus always did I raise the eyes of my soul unceasingly to her who was my surety, beseeching her to succour me in this solitude and penance. Hence I had for helper and coadjutor (adjutricem et coadjutricem) her, who gave birth to the Author of chastity, and so during the course of seventeen years, as I have said, did I combat with many dangers, till this day. From that time therefore, the Mother of God has stood by me as my help, directing me in all and through all things."*

28. S. SIMEON STYLITES THE YOUNGER.

"In the year 555,† on the 4th of June, S. Simeon Stylites the younger solemnly erected his pillar in the presence of the monks

* *Vita S. Mariæ Ægyptiacæ*, cap. xv. *sq.*, Patr. Lat. Tom. 73, pp. 681-684. That Sophronius Patriarch of Jerusalem (A.D. 633-636) was the author of this Life, is testified by Nicephorus, L. vii. cap. 5. It is cited as the work of Sophronius in the 2d Council of Nice, Act 4, and by S. John Damascene (*Orat.* iii. *de Imaginibus*). It is also mentioned as such in the *Triodium* Rosweydi (Notatio, *Ibid.* p. 690). The Life was translated from the Greek into Latin by Paul, Deacon of the Church of Naples (Sigebertus, *Catalogus Illustr. Ecclesiæ Scriptorum*, cap. 69, *Ibid.*). S. Mary of Egypt lived, according to some learned authors in the reign of the Emperor Justinian, Senior, about A.D. 520. According to others earlier. "About the year 480," writes Fr. Dalgairns, "some monk in Palestine wrote a narrative of an event, which took place on the Feast of the Exaltation of the Cross, probably in the year 383, the conversion of Mary of Egypt (*V.* the proofs in Bollandists, April 2)." *Introduction to Hahn-Hahn's Lives of the Fathers of the Desert*, p. liii.

† Assemani, quoted by Marin, Lib. ix. 22.

of his monastery, and called on Our Lord, His Mother, and the holy angels to witness the truth of the words which he then spoke. The same Saint wrote to the Emperor Justinian to complain of the destruction of an Image of Our Blessed Lady. The thought and the Name of Mary must evidently have been in his mind and have cheered him throughout his marvellous mystical life."*

* Dalgairns, *l. c.* p. lii. "The Emperor Justinian built a large monastery on the top of Mount Sinai which afforded shelter to a numerous community of monks." *Ibid.* p. 383.

CHAPTER IX.

THE ASSUMPTION.

In the fruits of the complete triumph which Jesus Christ as the Second Adam gained over sin, together with its consequences concupiscence and death, Mary, as the Second Eve, had an integral part. By her Immaculate Conception she shared in His victory over sin; by her virginal Maternity, over concupiscence; and by her Assumption in body and soul to heaven, over death. Her glorious Assumption is in truth but the complement of her Immaculate Conception. Such is the mind of the Church and the thought of the faithful. For it could never be, that she who is enshrined in their hearts as the bright and spotless mirror of justice and sanctity—all that is most pure, and holy, perfect, beautiful, and lovely, concerning whom no question may be raised of sin—should be subject to bodily corruption, or holden by the bands of death and the grave.

The doctrinal fact of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin after death in body and soul to heaven, though not defined as an article of faith, has formed a part of the Church's teaching and of the belief of the faithful throughout the East and West for more than thirteen centuries. It was held as explicitly in the sixth century, as it is at the present day. Since that date it has received no further development. And yet—to apply to this doctrine some words of S. Vincent of Lerins—there is no truth about Our Lady, "which, having been planted after the manner of seed, lay so long hidden in the days of the Church's infancy, or was of old more obscurely believed" than this of her Assumption. Whilst, on the other hand, no truth "was hailed with greater joy by the faithful, when once, by means of the Church's explicit teaching, they came to understand that which their fathers, though they understood it not, had ever held in veneration." *

* "Jam in seminis ratione proserta . . . in pueris jam ante latitaverit . . . ante obscurius credebatur. . . . Per te [scil. Ecclesiam] posteritas intellectum gratuletur, quod ante vetustas, non intellectum, venerabatur." *Commonitor.* i. 22, 23, Patr. Lat. Tom. 50, p. 667.

The fact is, that the thought of the Blessed Virgin being in integral person with her Divine Son in heaven, is, so to say, connatural to the heart and mind of a Catholic; and, so far from presenting any difficulty, is something so obvious, that, believing Mary to be what she is, he could hardly think otherwise of her. It is, moreover, a thought so satisfying to his piety, as to fill him with a peculiar sense of confidence and joy.

We have now to deal with what must seem a strange fact, *viz.*, that no direct reference to Our Lady's Assumption is to be found in any certainly authentic patristic writings now extant, earlier than the fifth century.

In default then of any positive evidence during the first four centuries, we shall gather together whatever matters of opinion or belief, bearing more or less nearly on the Assumption, appear from the writings of the Fathers to have prevailed amongst the faithful during that period. These will both serve as indications of the attitude and disposition of the early Christians towards the doctrine, before it was explicitly set forth, and will also explain the ready and universal acceptance of the truth on its first general publication.

First then: The belief was common from the earliest times that the Blessed Virgin was already in heaven, and was there in very great glory. This appears from a passage of S. Methodius—who wrote in the third century—in which he combats the opinion of those who took the Woman clothed with the sun in the apocalyptic vision,* to be the Blessed Virgin Mary. It is hence evident that this opinion was then already current, and that those who held it, believed Our Lady to be crowned with exceeding glory in heaven, and interpreted the vision according to a tradition to that effect. We should here remark that what S. Methodius objects to, is not the fact of Mary's great glory in heaven, but the interpretation of this particular vision of her. His view is that it represents the Church in her future conflicts and triumphs. The only reason he gives for rejecting its application to Our Lady is, that he cannot understand how a vision should set forth matters that are of past occurrence. Hence he will not admit that what S. John describes, is to be interpreted of Mary's divine child-birth, and the persecutions which she shared with her Son during His life on earth, since these were events that had taken place some time before.

* *Apoc.* xii.

His own interpretation appears strangely mystical. He explains the Woman to be the Church exclusively, and says that the Man-child who is born, is not Jesus Christ at all, but the faithful regenerated in baptism.*

Aretas in his *Commentary on the Apocalypse*, referring to S. Methodius, whom he follows, says:—

"Some have interpreted this woman clothed with the sun to be the in all things most holy Mother of God." †

S. Methodius derived his interpretation from S. Hippolytus who, writing some seventy years previously, and without making any allusion to the Blessed Virgin thus explains the Vision:—

"By *the Woman*, then, *clothed with the sun*, he meant most manifestly the Church, endued with the Father's Word, whose brightness is above the sun. And by *the moon under her feet*, he referred to her being adorned, like the moon, with heavenly glory. And the words, *upon her head a crown of twelve stars*, refer to the twelve Apostles by whom the Church was founded. And those, *she, being with child, cries travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered*, mean that the Church will not cease to bear from her heart (γεννῶσα ἐκ καρδίας) the Word that is persecuted by the unbelieving in the world. *And she brought forth*, he says, *a man-child, who is to rule all the nations;* ‡ by which is meant that the Church, always bringing forth Christ, the perfect man-child of God, who is declared to be God and man, becomes the instructor of all the nations. And the words, *her child was caught up unto God and to His throne*, signify that he who is always born of her is a heavenly king, and not an earthly one; even as David also declared of old when he said, *the Lord said unto my Lord, Sit Thou at My right hand until I make Thine enemies Thy footstool. . . .*" §

We have however direct testimony from the third century, that the Woman, whom S. John saw in his vision, was then held to be in the literal sense, Mary the Mother of Our Lord. For S. Victorinus (Bishop of Petau, and Martyr 290), a contemporary of

* *Conviv. Dec. Virg.* Orat. viii. cap. 7, 8, Patr. Gr. Tom. 18, p. 148.

† Patr. Gr. Tom. 106, p. 320. Cave dates this Andrew Aretas, Archbishop of Cæsarea in Cappadocia, about 540, and rejects as utterly groundless the notion that he was the same as Aretas a priest of Cæsarea in the tenth century, who also wrote on the Apocalypse, and borrowed much from his earlier namesake. Others who have critically examined the question, show from internal evidence that he cannot have written later than towards the end of the fifth century.

‡ The words, ὅς μέλλει ποιμαίνειν πάντα τὰ ἔθνη ἐν ῥάβδῳ σιδηρᾷ, are a quotation from *Ps.* ii. 27, where, in the literal sense, David is prophesying of the person of Christ; and so the same words should be understood in the Apocalypse. Thus it is that the author of the apocryphal *History of Joseph the Carpenter* (n. 7), in rendering the words of Gabriel to Joseph, *Matt.* i. 20, 21, applies the prophecy in the very words of S. John: ". . . She shall bring forth a Son, whose name shall be called Jesus. He it is *who is to rule all the nations with a rod of iron.*" See *Ante-Nicene Christian Library*, vol xvi. p. 65.

§ *De Christo et Antichristo*, nn. 60, 61, *Ib.* vol. ix., *Writings of S. Hippolytus*, vol. ii. p. 35.

S. Methodius, in his Commentary on the Apocalypse says that the Woman's Child is:—

"He who was born of her, without seed, owing nothing to death: and therefore the dragon could not devour Him. that is, detain Him in death; for on the third day He rose again . . . and was caught up to God and to His throne, as we read in the Acts of the Apostles, at His Ascension."

Having thus given the literal meaning, he goes on to interpret mystically the Woman as representing the Catholic Church.*

A writer of the fifth century,† commonly quoted as S. Augustine, most probably a contemporary and of the school of the Saint, speaks of the Woman in S. John's vision as universally interpreted in his time to be the Blessed Virgin set forth as a figure of the Church. His words are:—

"In the Apocalypse of John the Apostle it is written, that the dragon stood before the Woman who was ready to be delivered, that, when she should be delivered, he might devour her. Now none of you is ignorant that the dragon is the devil, and that by the woman is signified the Virgin Mary, who, herself all-pure, gave birth to our Head all-pure (quæ caput nostrum integra integrum peperit); who also in her own person showed forth a figure of the holy Church. For just as she, in giving birth to her Son, still remained a virgin, so too does the Church in all time give birth to His members without losing her virginity." ‡

From this ancient interpretation of the Apocalyptic vision of which we have record in the Fathers of the third century, we may gather that it would have been quite in harmony with the religious sense of the early Christians, for a painter or sculptor of that age to have represented Our Lady as clothed with the sun, with the moon at her feet, and a crown of twelve stars upon her head; or for a preacher in those days to have described her as having suffered great persecution, trial, and sorrow here on earth in rearing her Divine Child, and in union with Him; but as having come forth victorious from all these tribulations, and being now exceedingly glorified together with Him in heaven, clothed in garments of richest splendour, even with the Sun of Justice Himself; crowned as Queen of Paradise, with a share given to her of His own rule over this changeable world, and having the Church militant on earth suppliant at her feet: for both these were ancient interpretations of the moon in S. John's vision.

* *De Christo et Antichristo*, vol. xviii. p. 422.

† This may be inferred from the way he speaks of the Arians, as then a dominant power, *versus finem*. See the *Bened. Preface* to these discourses.

‡ *De Symb. ad Catech.* iv. *init.*, Int. Opp. August. Patr. Lat. Tom. 40, p. 661.

So much then may we gather, from the words of the Fathers whom we have cited, as to what was thought in those early times of our Lady's glory in heaven. But these passages of themselves afford no evidence that she was believed to be corporally in paradise; though, on the other hand, they show nothing that is opposed to such a belief. Indeed, it would be more natural to suppose that those who thus contemplated Mary in heavenly glory, should think—in so far as they dwelt explicitly on the matter—that she was there not only in soul, but in her body also, since her Divine Son whom they beheld in the same vision, was, they knew for certain, clad in heaven with that very same human body, which He had assumed in His Incarnation from her own flesh.

S. Epiphanius is the first Father we know of, who—by associating the Apocalyptic vision with Mary's death, and the consummation of her earthly course—appears to broach the question of Our Lady's corporal assumption—we say, *appears to broach the question:* for whilst touching on it only incidentally, and rather as an hypothesis, he expresses himself in words of studied caution and reserve.

The holy doctor was contending against the assailants of Mary's perpetual virginity, who sought to support their heresy by texts of sacred Scripture, and laid especial stress on the mention in the Gospels of *the brethren of Our Lord*. To meet them on their own ground, S. Epiphanius confines himself to the same line of argument, and will not allow them to assume anything, on their part, beyond what is written by the Evangelists. He pins them closely to the Sacred Text to which they had appealed, and thus confutes them with their own weapons. It is an *argumentum ad hominem*, which doubtless ties in great measure his own hands: for otherwise he might have made use of reasonings derived from other sources. Hence, his method caused him to be reticent, on the one hand, as to his own convictions; whilst, in his desire to turn against the heretics their own chosen weapons from Scripture, he is led, on the other hand, to overstrain the real force of its silence on certain points, though not unfairly, as against his opponents.

He had been speaking of Our Lord's commendation from the Cross, of Mary to S. John, as another proof that she was a desolate widow, without home or family. After quoting the words of the Gospel: *From that day the disciple took her to himself*, S. Epiphanius remarks that this gives no countenance to what

sometimes at that period grew into an abuse, and was inveighed against in ancient synods, the custom, namely, of ecclesiastics allowing female relatives or friends to dwell with them in their houses; for, says the Saint, there is nothing in the Gospels to show that Our Lady, because she was received by S. John for the time, thenceforth lived with him permanently. He thus continues:—

"But if any think I am in error, let them search the traces of Mary in the Scriptures, and they will find there no mention of her death, neither whether she died or whether she did not die, nor whether she was buried or was not buried. And then with regard to the journey of John when he set out for Asia (Minor), nowhere do we read that he took the holy Virgin with him.* For here Scripture is simply silent, in order not to lead away the mind to astonishment by matters of exceeding marvel. For my own part I do not dare to speak, but, whilst I have my own thoughts, observe a like silence. Still, though we are unable to certify her death, we may perchance find some traces of that holy and blessed one that bear upon it. For there is, on the one hand, what Simeon says to her, *Thine own soul also shall a sword pierce, that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed;* and, on the other hand, S. John tells us in the Apocalypse, that the dragon hastened against the Woman, who had brought forth the man-child, and there were given to her the wings of an eagle, and she was taken into the desert that the dragon might not seize on her.† This then may have been well fulfilled in Mary. However I do not decide, nor say that she remained immortal [that is, without dying]; nor either will I vouch that she died. For Holy Scripture, overpassing the human mind, has left the matter in suspense, for the sake of that precious and most sublime vessel, that no one should have thought concerning her of things pertaining to the flesh. Whether then she died at all we know not. And even though she were buried, yet was her virginity stainless.‡ But who

* We are not aware whether there is anything extant that connects the Blessed Virgin with Ephesus, of an earlier date than the words which occur in the Synodal Epistle of the Council, held there in 431, to the clergy and people of Constantinople, announcing the condemnation of Nestorius in that city of Ephesus, "in which John the Theologian and Mary the holy Mother of God ——" The sentence here breaks off, and is incomplete. According to some "are," or "are buried," is to be here understood. Others think that the passage is mutilated, and that "sometime dwelt," or "have their churches," or "are held in great honour," should be supplied. This latter opinion is the common one. It is that of Combefisius, who thinks it more probable that Our Lady did not visit Ephesus, but remained at Jerusalem, and S. John also, until her death (P. G. Tom. 97, p. 1073). According to S. Irenæus (L. iii. c. iii.) and S. Epiphanius (*Hær.* ii. 12), S. John went to preside over the Church at Ephesus, when he was very old, and the Blessed Virgin was in all probability already dead (See Butler, Dec. xxvii.). If she made some stay at Ephesus with S. John, she did so probably at an earlier period, and returned with him again to Jerusalem, where, so far as the labours of his apostolic life allowed, he watched over her until her death.

† *Apoc.* xii.

‡ Οὐ συνῆπται σάρκι. The general scope of S. Epiphanius here seems to show that this is the sense of his words; though their literal rendering, *viz.*,

would be so mad as to be willing to give vent to any such blasphemous and unworthy thought, to open his mouth, give licence to his tongue, and utter with his lips what comes of evil mind? Who is there that would prefer, instead of hymning and glorifying her, to entertain any thoughts insulting and injurious to the holy Virgin, and not rather honour that vessel of all the most honoured?" *

We think it would be unfair to conclude from these words of S. Epiphanius, that he himself entertained any serious doubts as to Our Lady's death. His argument is one *ad hominem*, against those who dishonoured the Mother of God by denying her perpetual virginity, and in his zeal for her glory he stretches his argument to its utmost limits, and even seemingly beyond them. He had given proofs from Scripture, to which the heretics appealed, that Mary was entirely removed from all carnal concupiscence, and then—because death and corruption were regarded as the consequence of concupiscence—he urges as a confirmation, that there is no evidence in Holy Writ that she ever died or was buried at all, or rather, leaves to his opponents the impossible task of proving it from Scripture.† He has, he says, his own thoughts on the matter, but will keep them to himself, and pronounce nothing decisively. To our mind this tacit conviction of his was, that Our Lady—whether she died and was buried or not, as thus he puts it for the sake of his argument—was already in heavenly glory both of soul and body. The common belief, which the Saint would doubtless share, was that the Blessed Virgin really died; though for reasons which we shall explain later on, there was in the earlier centuries much hesitation and reserve in speaking of her death. Had there been in his day a prevalent opinion to the contrary, it is probable that the holy doctor would have cited it to strengthen his argument; for his words show that he would have been inclined to favour such a view, if it served to silence the heretical blasphemy, that death was in Our Lady's case a consequence and proof of concupiscence. But even on the hypothesis that Mary never died at all, S. Epiphanius would by no means have held that she was translated, as were Enoch and Elias, to some place secret and unknown; for appealing to Scripture he identifies her with the Woman of

"she was not conjoined to flesh," might imply that Our Lady did not follow the ordinary law of flesh, by her body undergoing the corruption of the grave, "even though she were buried."

* *Hær.* 78, 11, Patr. Gr. Tom. 12, p. 716.

† See Baronius, *Annal.* ad Ann. Christi 48, num. 11 et 12, quoted by Ben. xiv. *De Festis*, P. ii. De Assump. B. V. n. C.

S. John's vision, clothed with the sun, and already in heavenly glory. He adds, moreover, that the eagle's wings given to the Woman to escape the seizure of the dragon may well be explained to denote Mary's rescue from death; or—as the whole context seems to indicate to be the Saint's meaning—that there was some divine interposition in her case, whereby she was preserved from the effects of death. This thought underlies his whole argument, and shows that he would have rejected with horror the notion that, if the Blessed Virgin died and was buried, her holy body underwent the corruption of the tomb.

Further on in the same Chapter * S. Epiphanius recurs again to the possibility of Mary having "remained," that is, both in body and soul without dying. In the next Chapter † he says that he is prepared to ascribe to Our Lady whatever was most excellent in any other Saints that would the more redound to her glory and praise—making mention first of Elias, then of S. John the Evangelist and S. Thecla. In speaking of Elias, he seems to draw a parallel between him and Mary, in the privileges of perpetual virginity and "his being taken up without having ever seen death." ‡ In the next sentence, however, he appears to qualify or explain the latter privilege in the case of Elias, by saying that "he is still amongst the living," that is, not yet in heaven, even in soul. But this, at any rate, as we have already seen, he certainly did not hold with regard to the Blessed Virgin. All this tends to confirm the view we have taken that his own conviction was, that Our Lady was already in heaven both in body and soul; but whether she was assumed thither after passing through death or not, he will not, for various reasons, positively affirm.

We have dwelt so long on this passage of S. Epiphanius on account of its importance, as being, we believe, the earliest extant, which interprets explicitly the Woman in S. John's vision to be the Blessed Virgin; though we know, indeed, that this was a recognised sense before his time. What gives additional and special value to his words is, that now for the first time the vision is brought to bear upon the mystery of Our Lady's death, and made to adumbrate, at least, her glorious Assumption. §

* *Hær.* 78, n. 23.

† *Hær.* 79, n. 5. See these two passages quoted above, p. 301.

‡ S. Methodius also parallels Mary and Elias, mentioning these same two privileges. See p. 154, *supra*.

§ S. Epiphanius, and also the writer of the passage quoted above (Int. Opp. S. Augustini), recognise alike in the Woman seen by S. John the person of

That the belief of Mary's corporal assumption into heaven would not have been out of harmony with the religious sense of the early Christians, is evident from another opinion that was not uncommon in the first centuries, *viz.*, that S. John, who stood with Our Lord's Mother at the foot of the Cross, and was so intimately associated with her here on earth, was himself taken up body and soul to heaven, and, as some held, without dying. S. Ambrose and S. Augustine mention this view without blame.

"All," says S. Ambrose, "must pass through flames, should it be even John the Evangelist whom the Lord so loved as to say of him to Peter: *For thus I will him to remain. What is it to thee? Follow thou me.* Of his death some have doubted: of his passage through the fire [which guards paradise] none can doubt, because he is in paradise, and is not separated from Christ." *

This prevalent opinion that S. John never died doubtless took its rise from Our Lord's own words concerning him.

"But it may be said," remarks Fr. J. B. Morris, "that S. John himself when he says, *Non dicit Jesus: Non moritur*, anticipates and refutes such a notion. But it is easier to believe that S. John's humility availed itself of what Jesus did not say, to elude ascribing anything remarkable to himself, than it is to get rid of the impression that the words of Jesus naturally meant,

Mary; but each according to his particular scope; the one viewing her as not held under the power of death, the other as the figure and type of the Church. Had it been their object to interpret the whole vision, and had the Assumption been brought in their time into as prominent question as it was in the two next centuries, they would doubtless have clearly identified the living person of Mary—whom they saw revealed as the Apocalyptic Woman in child-birth and conflict—with the same Woman, also in her exaltation to heaven and glorious Coronation.

* *In Ps.* cxviii. cap. 20, n. 11, Patr. Lat. Tom. 15, p. 1564. See S. August. *In Joan.* Tr. cxxiv. c. 1-3, Tom. 35, p. 1369; also *Serm.* 253, c. 3, 4, Tom. 38, p. 1181. S. Gregory of Tours (*De miraculis*, Lib. i., Tom. 71, p. 715) thus relates the legend of S. John's assumption without dying: "John, Apostle and Evangelist, after having fulfilled his course, both of meritorious conflict and most salutary preaching, went down alive into the grave, and ordered that he should be covered with earth." He adds, that manna was said to flow from his tomb. The author of the *Epistle to Paula and Eustochium on the Assumption* (Int. pp. S. Hieron. Patr. Lat. Tom. 30, p. 122) records the belief of S. John's resurrection after death, and assumption to heaven, and also the manna. That S. John really died and was buried, was of course the common and true teaching. S. Jerome expressly records his death and burial as occurring at Ephesus in the 68th year after Our Lord's Passion (*De Vir. Ill.* Tom. 23, p. 625). S. Chrysostom speaks of his sepulchre and relics (not necessarily corporal relics; for of these, according to common belief, none has been ever known to exist) as still venerated in his day at Ephesus. S. Thomas says that S. John's corporal assumption to heaven was a pious belief common at his time (Tr. vi. *In. Symb.*). We may remark that perhaps no Saint has appeared in recorded visions so frequently with Our Lady as S. John. He was with her when she appeared to S. Gregory Thaumaturgus—the first vision of the Blessed Virgin that is related in the writings of the Fathers.

and actually did promise something remarkable. That neither he nor Mary suffered martyrdom, in the common sense of the word, is universally believed. Whether he really was raised to life again, need not be discussed here. It is sufficient to observe the existence of a certain *animus* in the Church implied by this tradition, and that *animus* implies a desire to ascribe to a very special favourite of Christ the continuance of his bodily existence. . . . Where there is no proof, either one way or the other, that Mary's body was then believed to be in heaven, and there is proof that she was believed to be there [*i.e.*, at any rate, in soul], then, whether she was believed to be there in body, may be made probable by what was believed about S. John. It is no matter whether this latter was false or true. . . . There was some analogy to go by. . . . In this way what several believed of S. John becomes a presumption, as to what was believed of Mary." *

But there was not only this exceptional case of S. John. For the belief was not uncommon that the Saints recorded by S. Matthew,† as raised again to life and appearing in Jerusalem after Our Lord's resurrection, did not return to death, but were taken up bodily into heaven with Him at His Ascension. S. Jerome witnesses to this belief, saying that we may understand *the Holy City* to mean both the heavenly Jerusalem, and Jerusalem here below.‡

Eusebius also :—

"When His dead body was raised again to life, many bodies of them that slept arose, and together with Him entered into the holy and truly heavenly city." §

And S. Epiphanius :—

"However great a Saint a deceased man may be, what comparison is there between him and Our Lord? For the one is God, and he but a man; the one in heaven, the other on earth, inasmuch as he has his corporal relics on earth; except those who rose from the dead, and entered into the bridal chamber, as the Gospel relates." He here quotes *Matt.* xxvii. 52, 53, and continues: "But of what holy city does he speak? For the phrase is fulfilled in both, namely, in the city here below, and in the one above. That they entered into Jerusalem here on earth first, is clear. But before the Saviour ascended to heaven, no one had gone thither until these went up together with Him. *For no one has ascended into heaven, but He who came down from heaven, the Son of Man.*" ||

Origen too had said :—

"Those who then rose did not again die." ¶

* *Jesus the Son of Mary*, vol. ii., p. 394.
† *Matt.* xxvii. 52, 53.
‡ *Comment.* in loc. Tom. 26, p. 213.
§ *Demonstr. Evangel.* L. iv. c. 12, Patr. Gr. Tom. 22, p. 283.
|| *John* iii. 15. *Hær.* 75, 8, Patr. Gr. Tom. 42, p. 513.
¶ *Contr. Cels.* L. ii. 16, Tom. 11, p. 832.

S. Augustine speaking of the opinion that "to these saints was granted a resurrection like to that which is promised to us at the last day," says:—

"This is in no way opposed to what is written, namely, that Christ is *the First-born from the dead:* * for according to this view, He goes before, and they straightway rise again to eternal incorruption and immortality. A difficulty however," he remarks, "may occur to some from the words of S. Peter, who when preaching on Our Lord's resurrection, and quoting the words of the Psalm: *Thou wilt not leave My soul in hell, nor suffer Thy Holy One to see corruption*, says that David did not here prophesy of himself, but of Christ: for that David saw corruption, and his sepulchre was still in their midst; † which words would seem to exclude the notion that David was of the number of those who were already risen, and of his body being in heavenly glory. But it seems hard that David should not have been in that resurrection of the just, if it were granted to them as eternal, since Christ is so frequently, and with so great evidence, and with such honourable mention, commended as being of David's seed." ‡

It is plain from these words that S. Augustine regarded such reunion of body and soul as a very great privilege and glory, and considered a soul separate from its body to be in an imperfect state of existence.

"The Humanity of Our Saviour Himself"—again we borrow the words of Fr. Morris—"might be said to be in an imperfect state of existence while He was in the grave. And as this state did not become Him, S. Peter says it was impossible for Him to be holden by it. We can imagine Our Lord submitting to this degradation for a brief period—nay we must believe it: but we could not imagine Him in such an imperfect state for the several centuries which elapse between His death and the judgment. Nay the ascent of His Flesh into heaven is made in some way the condition of His giving gifts to men.

"If therefore this be so, all those passages of the Fathers which ascribe to Mary the most perfect human nature after Christ's; all those places which specially signalise her immunity from actual sin; all the texts which assign to her the office of paraclete or advocate next to Christ, or speak of her putting on her Son's glory; all that in any way intimate the perfect immaculateness of her flesh, or—its almost essentially necessary co-ordinate—the absolute spotlessness of her soul; may be at least said to lisp of her assumption into

* *Apoc.* i. 5.

† The objection here raised by S. Augustine, so far from being a difficulty for those who maintain the opinion he is reviewing, is considered to be a confirmation of it: since S. Peter says no more than that David's *sepulchre* was to be still seen. The same is recorded of S. John's tomb at Ephesus, though his corporal relics were commonly believed to be no longer there.

‡ *Ep.* 164, (al. 99), Tom. 33, p. 712. Suarez discusses the question at length; and says that, all things well considered, the opinion that the risen Saints went with Our Lord to heaven, is the more probable one, since it has for it greater authority, is in better accord with all the circumstances, and more brightly illustrates the Divine mercy and goodness, and the glory of Christ. Qu. liii. Art. iii. Cornelius a Lapide terms it, *the truer opinion*.

heaven. * They do their very best to make the idea, that a dutiful and omnipotent Son left her flesh to rot and be devoured by loathsome worms, refused to give her soul back the heart which had supplied Him with blood, the breasts which had satisfied Him with milk, the hands that had dressed His helpless infancy, the feet that had carried His embryo love to the Baptist, and the womb in which He had passed His early days of redeeming condescension—so united to her *flesh* as to seem one person with it—refused to put that flesh in heaven, and make it able to transmit the graces His own sacrificed Flesh was winning evermore—I say, they do their very best to make such an idea revolting, odious, and disgustful to every feeling of gratitude the human heart is capable of. It is not easy to see how the liberal Saviour, who swore to reward the gift of a cup of cold water to the meanest disciple, could refrain from repaying the maternal offices of Mary with the choicest gift He could bestow. Nor will the delay of centuries savour much of that filial gratitude, which is one of the unblamable affections of human nature. Let those who feel any repugnance at believing the flesh of Mary to be glorified, cautiously inquire of their own consciences, what is their habitual and daily belief about the Flesh of Christ. For it may be that they have no rooted habitual belief that that Flesh is in heaven, which ought to have Mary's beside it." †

This quotation from Fr. Morris is but the application of the words last cited from S. Augustine. If it seems hard that David, of whose seed was Christ, should be excluded from that anticipatory resurrection of the just, how much harder for Mary of whose own flesh He was incarnate.

A marked silence prevails generally amongst the earlier Fathers over all that relates to Our Lady's death. Hardly any of them even allude to it. The passage which we have cited from S. Epiphanius is perhaps the most explicit that can be found. S. Ambrose, who wrote with such fulness and detail of the virtues which Mary practised in her life, once only, so far as we can remember, refers to her death; and then in terms that only reveal the more how little was known about it. Commenting on Simeon's words to Mary, *Thine own soul also a sword shall pierce*,‡ etc., he says:—

"Neither Scripture nor history relates that Mary departed this life by suffering bodily martyrdom; for not the soul, but the body, is transpierced by a material sword. And thus [the Sacred text] shows forth the prudence of Mary who knew full well the heavenly mystery." S. Ambrose then quotes S. Paul, *Heb.* iv. 12, 13, by way of application.§

* "Easily," says S. Augustine, "is the body raised to the heights of heaven, when no burden of sins weighs down the spirit." *Serm. de Asc. Domini.* 263, n. 2.

† Morris, *Ib.* p. 400.

‡ See the holy doctor's mystical interpretation of these words, *supra*, on *Cant.* i. 2, p. 92.

§ *In Luc.* ii. 35. Patr. Lat. Tom. 15, p. 1665.

Here the holy doctor clearly implies that the Blessed Virgin really died, but not by martyrdom; and that the circumstances of her death were not generally known. The only apparent reason for mentioning death by martyrdom at all, is to show that the sword spoken of by Simeon should be taken not in a literal, but in a figurative sense.*

S. Augustine in answering a question of S. Paulinus on Simeon's sword has words to the same effect.†

It would hence appear that all certain and reliable memories of Mary's death and burial, as well as what had thereupon happened, were lost, and that the record even of her place of sepulture lay buried beneath the ruins of Jerusalem. If, however, some local tradition of the event still survived—as we shall find the patriarch Juvenal affirming later on—S. Epiphanius would certainly have known of it: for, himself a native of Palestine, he had resided there for many years, and was well versed in all matters of Christian antiquity. Still we do not think that his silence is a conclusive proof of his unacquaintance with such tradition, and of its consequent non-existence, but shows rather that he looked on it as unauthentic, and undeserving of any special notice. Moreover its introduction into his controversy would have tended to obscure the force of his own argument, which was exclusively scriptural, and to render plausible that of his opponents, by thus giving some colour to the Blessed Virgin's death. Whilst, on the other hand, the vagueness of the tradition, and its uncertain origin deprived it of all claim to special mention on his part.

From the way in which S. Epiphanius speaks of Mary's unrecorded death and burial in connection with S. John's journey to Asia Minor, and seems to discountenance the view of her accompanying him thither; because too, it was notorious that S. John had died and was buried at Ephesus, whilst there seems to have been, at the same time, an opinion more or less current that Our Lady also had died and was buried there—for all these reasons taken together, we are inclined to think that the holy doctor—who tells us that he had his own thoughts on the whole matter—himself held that she died and had her sepulchre at

* A writer of the seventh century, sometimes wrongly quoted as S. Isidore, or as S. Ildephonsus, re-echoes the words of S. Ambrose, with the same application from the Hebrews, and the following addition of his own: "This however is certain, that no one knows of her death, or how she passed from this light [the light of day], though it is also certain that her sepulchre has its place in Jerusalem. . . . Hence the Assumption of holy Mary is celebrated on the 15th of August." Patr. Lat. Tom. 83, p. 1285. † *Ep.* 149. See above, p. 159.

Jerusalem, and consequently would have favoured any reliable local tradition which supported that view.

But that whatever such tradition was at that time surviving, excited very little attention amongst the more learned, is confirmed by the silence of S. Jerome on the matter. For we know how he treasured up all the memories of the Holy Places, and with what frequent devout mention he speaks of Our Lady at Bethlehem; and yet, when describing in detail his pilgrimage with S. Paula and S. Eustochium to Jerusalem, and their visits to Mount Olivet, and to the tombs of the patriarchs and kings in the valley of Josaphat, he makes no allusion whatever to the site of the Blessed Virgin's sepulchre, which according to the tradition was close by in Gethsemane.*

Again, we could hardly believe that Our Lady's corporal assumption was a living tradition at Edessa and Nisibis in the fourth century, when S. Ephrem wrote: for if so, it is difficult to explain why that Saint, so devout to the Blessed Virgin and eloquent in her praise, nowhere, so far as we can find, even distantly alludes to this her crowning glory in any of his writings.

So far, then, as extant records of antiquity show, it seems quite evident that the explicit teaching and belief of the Assumption as a Catholic tradition was generally unknown at that period. But we are not, therefore, to conclude that this negative view is the whole account of the case, and much less that the doctrine was not believed implicitly. For though the Assumption was not a living tradition authenticated by the Church's teaching, it might nevertheless have survived as a popular belief in many parts of Christendom. In fact, the various apocryphal works on this very subject that appeared from time to time, are at once the evidence and outcome of such belief; and served moreover to keep it alive amongst the people; whilst such belief was, as we have already seen, in full accord with the religious sense of the faithful on other kindred points of doctrine.

* See S. Jerome, *Ep.* 108. *Ad Eustoch., Epitaph. Paulæ matris.* Patr. Lat. Tom. 22, p. 878 *sq.* *Ep.* 46. *Paulæ et Eutstoch. ad Marcellam, De Sanctis locis. Ib.* p. 483: "It may appear surprising," says Suarez, "that Jerome, Eusebius, Sozomen, and Theodoret, when enumerating the more celebrated tombs and holy places at Jerusalem, make no mention of the sepulchre of the Blessed Virgin Mary. . . . Burchard in his *Description of the Holy Land*, P. i. c. vii. 47, says that after the destruction of Jerusalem her sepulchre was probably for a long time unknown, and was discovered later on in the valley of Josaphat. To this the author of the *Epistle to Paula and Eustochium on the Assumption*, written under S. Jerome's name, bears witness." *De Mysteriis*, Disp. xxi. Sect. iii. 1. See appendix to this chapter, n. 3.

The apocryphal works so common in the first ages of the Church, besides being anonymous or supposititious, were generally more or less overlaid with unreliable statements, and legendary fiction. Some of them were written by heretics, or were of an heretical tendency. Fr. Coleridge is of opinion that they were very considerably tampered with by heretical adulterations.

"On this account," he says, "the class of literature to which the Apocryphal Gospels belong was under great suspicion, and it is most probable that, so to say, the innocent suffered with the guilty in the proscription which followed, and many a genuine morsel of ancient tradition was neglected and perished, because it could not easily be discriminated from the spurious matter which had grown up around it. The word *apocryphal* is not in its proper meaning a word of necessarily bad import, for it may be applied to writings of the most perfect orthodoxy and the most complete veracity. But on account of the many dangerous and heretical works which had been put in circulation by the enemies of the Church, we find the Fathers speaking more severely of the whole class than some of its members deserved. It is clear that to a writer, for instance, like S. Jerome there was a great temptation to reject and proscribe the whole of a literature which might still contain many precious historical traditions." *

There were several apocryphal treatises on the death and Assumption of Our Lady; those of them still extant are attributed by critics to a date not later than the fourth century.†

Such writings, though to us they are of value as witnessing to the primitive tradition and embodying its substantial truth, tended no doubt to discredit it with many in early times: and hence may be explained in great measure the silence of the Fathers on the whole subject, as well as their caution and reserve whenever they approached the question.

On the other hand nothing is to be found in their writings

* *The Preparation of the Incarnation*, p. 234. See also Mgr. Gaume's *Life of the Good Thief*, De Lisle's translation, 1882, pp. 9-12.

† In the Ante-Nicene Christian Library, vol. xvi. *Apocryphal Gospels*, etc. Clark, Edinburgh, 1880, pp. 504-530, are Translations of three apocryphal treatises on the Assumption, *viz.*, *The Book of John concerning the Falling asleep of Mary*, by Pseudo-John, *The First Latin Form*, and *The Second Latin Form* of *the Passing of Mary*. The numerous Latin recensions, the Editor tells us in his *Introduction*, p. xxii., of the *Passing of Mary* by Pseudo-Melito differ considerably from each other, as may be seen from a comparison of the First Latin Form with the Second. They are all however from the same source, and that probably the Greek Text. The Greek texts again exhibit considerable variations, especially in the latter portions. There are translations or recensions of the Greek in Syriac, Sahidic, and Arabic, which have been published and rendered into English and other modern languages during the latter half of the present century. Tischendorf who has edited the Greek Text for the first time, assigns to it a date not later than the fourth century. S. Epiphanius makes distinct mention of both treatises, the one by Pseudo-John and the other by Pseudo-Melito.

that reflects any doubt on the doctrine of the integral assumption of Our Lady to heaven; nor is there extant in their works any denial or refutation of the event as it is recorded in the apocryphal documents, though these must have been well known to them. There is nothing in fact of a positive nature during all those centuries to show that the doctrine of Mary's bodily incorruption and exaltation to heaven was not at least implicitly believed, or to dissuade us from holding that the words attributed to S. Augustine expressed the common sentiment of the Fathers and faithful: "Corpus Virginis vermibus traditum, quia sentire non valeo, dicere perhorresco."* Nay, so strong was the feeling that the holy Mother of God could not be held under the power of death and the grave, that the doubt was rather whether she had died at all, and had not been translated to glory without any dissolution of soul and body.

But besides this matter of apocryphal writings there was a consideration of a doctrinal character, which doubtless caused much of the hesitation that is noticeable in the early Fathers as to Our Lady's death, and their general reticence on all that surrounded it.

Perhaps their most prominent teaching about the Blessed Virgin was that she was the Second Eve. Now it was the sin of disobedience that made our first mother subject to death: for had she kept her first estate of grace and innocence, death would have had no claim on her. There was, then, at first sight a seeming incongruity in attributing death, which was the penalty of sin, to Mary, in whose case there was no question of sin; since, according to the same Fathers' teaching, she had not only herself persevered in grace and sanctity, but had also, through

* "That that most sacred body, from which Christ assumed flesh, and united the divine nature to the human—without losing what He was, but assuming what He was not, so that the *Word was made flesh*, that is, God became Man—was given over to be food for worms, since I am unable to think it, I shudder to say it. To suppose that the flesh of Mary was subject to the common lot of corruption, and of turning to dust through worms seems out of all thought, since the privilege of her incomprehensible grace banishes far away such a notion." *De Assump. B.M.V.* Int. Opp. S. August. Tom. vi. p. 1140, Append. "The Holy Ghost says that *the glory of a man is from the honour of his father, and a father without honour is the disgrace of the son* (Ecclus. iii. 13). 'Therefore it was,' says an ancient writer, the one just cited, 'that Jesus preserved the body of Mary from corruption after death; for it would have redounded to His dishonour, had that virginal flesh with which He had clothed Himself become the food of worms. For corruption is a disgrace of human nature: and as Jesus was not subject to it, Mary was also exempted; for the flesh of Jesus is the flesh of Mary,'" etc. *Glories of Mary* by S. Alphonsus Liguori, p. 266.

her perfect faith and obedience, reversed all the evil that the first Eve had wrought. With regard to Jesus Christ her Son it was otherwise. There were extrinsic reasons why He should die, that had no place in her case; since He underwent the penalty of death to atone for the sins of all mankind.

Before the whole doctrine of original sin had been more fully and scientifically worked out, there appears in the writings of some of the Fathers a certain hesitation and indefiniteness in their treatment of the twofold aspect of death, as the condition of human nature, or again, as the direct punishment of Adam's sin.* S. Augustine was the first to point out clearly this distinction, showing, as he does, that even Christ Himself, had He not been crucified in the flower of His age, would still, according to His natural condition as man, by growing into age, at length have died; since the flesh He assumed was in truth *like* ours, though free from all sin. These are his words:—

"But because there was in Him the likeness of sinful flesh, He willed, commencing even from infancy, to undergo the changes of the various ages of life, so that by the very fact of His reaching old age, that same flesh might be seen capable of arriving at death, had He not been cut off as a young man. Now, in sinful flesh this death is due to disobedience, but in the likeness of sinful flesh it is received with the will of obedience." †

Christ's most holy Mother, too, was in the same manner subject to death, and—as He Himself was—to such conditions and effects of human nature—though actually they are also penalties of sin—as were not in any way unbefitting the sanctity and dignity of her state.‡

That the holy body of Mary was, in the first centuries, generally believed to be no longer upon earth, is confirmed again by the fact, that notwithstanding the well-known universal cultus of saints' and martyrs' relics from the earliest times, no desire or curiosity was evinced to obtain her relics, nor even any anxiety to ascertain where they might be found. And whereas the Church has uniformly claimed to possess relics of the bodies of almost every other Saint of the Apostolic age, nowhere has it been alleged that there existed any corporal relic of the Blessed Virgin.

But had Our Lady's body been believed to be still on earth, such indifference on the part of the faithful is simply incredible; especially when we recall to mind the pious eagerness with which

* *Rom.* v. 12, vi. 23. † *De peccat. merit.* Patr. Lat. Tom. 44, p. 180.
‡ See Ben. xiv., *De Fest. B. M. V.* ci.

they sought for hidden relics of the saints, and the enthusiastic joy and devotion that everywhere attended their discovery. Nor could we so conceive of the watchful providence of Our Lord over His Church, or of His filial piety and loving reverence towards His Blessed Mother, that He should vouchsafe to make known by special revelation where the bodies of so many of His servants lay buried—as He did to S. Ambrose in the case of SS. Gervasius and Protasius at Milan, and of S. Stephen to Lucian at Jerusalem—that He should glorify their relics by countless miracles wrought at their invocation; and should at the same time allow the sacred body of Her from whom He had Himself become incarnate, to remain unknown, lost in oblivion, and altogether unhonoured.*

We may feel well assured that had it been Our Lord's will that the body of His holy Mother should remain here on earth, He would have so disposed of events and inspired His Church, that her relics should be venerated with an honour far beyond that paid to those of all other saints, and proportioned to the surpassing greatness of her sanctity and dignity as Mother of God.

We have now completed our inquiry as to the place which Our Lady's Assumption held in the Church during the first four centuries, and the attitude of the Catholic mind towards it. In tracing the vestiges of its tradition, and gathering up its *disjecta membra*, we have seen, so far as extant documents discover, that it lay, doctrinally, during that period in an embryo rudimentary form within the Church's womb of teaching, and was in such sense an object of implicit faith. Whilst, as an historical fact, it failed to obtain generally distinct recognition and to be explicitly believed, both because circumstances had greatly tended to obliterate its memories, and probably also because the stream of its popular tradition was conveyed through apocryphal and unauthorised channels, in some measure tainted by legendary

* For the revelation made to S. Ambrose as to the burial-place of SS. Gervasius and Protasius, A.D. 386, and to Lucian as to that of S. Stephen, etc., see Butler, June 19th and August 3rd. S. Ambrose, S. Augustine, and S. Paulinus were present at the translation of the two former Saints' bodies on the third day after their discovery, and witnessed the miracles that then occurred. S. Augustine had portions of their relics, as well as of S. Stephen's conveyed to Hippo. Both at Milan and Hippo, as also in many other Churches, frequent miracles took place at the invocation of these Saints, as S. Augustine and other Fathers repeatedly record. See S. Ambr. *Ep.* 22, *Ad Marcell. Soror.* S. August. *De Civ. Dei.*, L. xxii. c. 8. *Confess.* L. ix. c. 7. *Serm.* 76, 94, 286, 319, 320. S. Gaudent. *Serm.* 17. S. Greg. Tur. *De glor. Mart.* c. 47.

fable. Hence the truth of the fact itself came to be suspected by some.

But we should here bear in mind what was before said—that never during that period had there been any question or opposition raised by any of the Fathers as to the event itself, whether doctrinally or historically; though the apocryphal writings in which it was circumstantially narrated and their ungenuineness must have been well known to them. The Fathers of the first four centuries are indeed themselves generally silent on the matter; but when here or there their silence is broken, what is said by them is found to be a confirmation of the truth as later on it was explicitly taught and believed.

In the fifth century there are indications that the doctrine of Our Lady's corporal Assumption was at length beginning to emerge from the region of hesitating statement and implicit belief, into that of explicit and categorical assertion. The discovery of the Blessed Virgin's sepulchre at Jerusalem was principally the providential occasion of this change. It is also likely that the publication of the works under the name of S. Denys the Areopagite, written most probably towards the middle of this century, tended not a little to the ventilation of the whole question, and to bringing it into greater prominence, since they contain the first circumstantial statement now extant, relating to Our Lady's Assumption that was not held to be derived from an apocryphal source.

There is no contemporary record of the discovery of Our Lady's tomb, but there is no doubt it was made at this period. S. John Damascene writing in the early part of the eighth century, and quoting the words of what he calls the Euthymian History, relates, as an unquestionable fact that in the year 451 Marcian and Pulcheria having heard of the recent discovery of the Blessed Virgin's tomb, and of the Church built upon its site in Gethsemane, sent for Juvenal the bishop of Jerusalem and other bishops of Palestine, then in Constantinople on occasion of the Council that was being held at Chalcedon, and desired him to send the coffin containing her sacred body to Constantinople, that it might be placed in one of the churches lately erected there by the Empress in honour of the Mother of God. Juvenal replied, with other details, that it was true the coffin was still in Gethsemane, but not the body; for that, according to an ancient and trustworthy tradition, on the Apostles opening the sepulchre the third day after her death and burial, they found nothing

within but the grave-clothes, the holy body of the Virgin having been already assumed to heaven. On hearing this their imperial Majesties desired that the coffin wherein Our Lady's body had reposed, together with the garments which it contained, should be sent sealed to Constantinople. And there it was deposited in the magnificent basilica *Ad S. Mariam in Blachernis* lately built by S. Pulcheria. What S. John Damascene thus records as an historical fact, is alluded to by later Fathers, and is given at full length by Nicephorus.*

With regard to the works which have so long borne the name of S. Dionysius, learned critics vary much as to their date. The Anglican Cave places them about the year 362. The first time that we know they were cited publicly, and as written by S. Dionysius, was in the Conference between the Catholics and the Monophysite Severians, held at Constantinople, A.D. 532, by desire of the Emperor Justinian. It is related that, on the Severians appealing to these writings amongst other orthodox works, Hypatius, bishop of Ephesus, replied that they were unknown to S. Athanasius, S. Cyril, and other Fathers. They are however quoted by S. Ephrem, patriarch of Antioch, A.D. 526, who was a great opponent of the Severians,† and by Andrew, bishop of Cæsarea, about A.D. 500. At the close of the sixth century Leontius Byzantius, who wrote much against the Monophysite heresy, refers more than once to the works of the so-called S. Dionysius, and numbers him amongst the principal Fathers and Doctors who wrote before the age of Constantine.‡ They are also referred to by S. Gregory the Great about the same time.§

* S. John Damasc. Hom. ii. 18. *In Dormit. B. V. M.* Patr. Gr. Tom. 96, pp. 747-752. Niceph. *Hist.* L. ii. c. 23, xiv. c. 2, xv. 19. Critics are not agreed as to who the Euthymius, here referred to, was. Some suppose him to be the holy Abbot of that name, who lived for many years near Jerusalem, was present at Chalcedon as the great opponent of Eutychianism, and died aged ninety-five in 472. (See Butler's *Lives, S. Euthymius*, Jan. 20th.) We read nothing, however, of this Euthymius writing any literary works. Others hold that the Euthymius here cited lived later than S. John Damascene, and on that ground reject this Second Homily. Lambecius maintains that this *Euthymian History* was not an ecclesiastical history written by any one of that name, but a biographical history of S. Euthymius himself, and probably the work of the monk Cyril of Scythopolis in the first half of the sixth century. In Cyril's life of S. Euthymius, the text of which, both Greek and Latin, is still extant, but said to be imperfect and corrupted—there is no trace whatever of the passage quoted by S. John Damascene. In any case it appears certain, that Juvenal made this alleged statement; and that the Blessed Virgin's tomb was publicly claimed to have been discovered at that time.

† Patr. Gr. Tom. 86, p. 2102.

‡ *Ib.* p. 1213. *De Sectis*, Act. iii. 2, and Lib. ii. *Contr. Nestor. et Eutych.*

§ *Hom.* 34 *in Luc.* S. Gregory does not positively attribute the writings

But whatever the learned may determine as to the date and authorship of these works, we know that they were accounted genuine during many centuries, and have always been held by the Church in high esteem. We have said so much about them, to show that they are not to be ranked in the same category with other spurious or apocryphal works, but may claim a much greater authority than these as witnessing to the Church's tradition. The passage we refer to runs thus:—

"When both we, as thou knowest, and he (Hierotheus), and many of our holy brethren were come together to behold that body which gave the principle of life and received God (*ἐπὶ τὴν θεάν τοῦ ζωαρχικοῦ καὶ θεοδόχου σώματος*), there were present also James the Lord's brother, and Peter, the supreme and most venerable summit of theologians (*ἡ κορυφαία καὶ πρεσβυτάτη τῶν θεολόγων ἀκρότης*). It then seemed good after the sight, that all the sacred prelates should hymn in praise (*ὑμνῆσαι*), as each was able, the goodness of divine weakness endued with infinite power." *

in question to Dionysius. His words import some hesitation: "Fertur vero Dionysius Areopagita, antiquus videlicet et venerabilis pater, dicere," etc. As however the passage to which S. Gregory refers (*De Cœl. Hierarch.* cap. vii. 9, 13), does not contain the particular opinion enounced, the hesitation implied by the words: "Fertur dicere," may be either intended to qualify the opinion as really that of S. Dionysius, or S. Gregory's own belief of the genuineness of the works under Dionysius's name. The question of the authorship, orthodoxy, and date of these writings is discussed at length in Fessler's *Institutiones Patrologiæ*, re-edited and augmented by Canon Jungmann, Professor of Ecclesiastical History and Patrology at Louvain, 1890, Tom. i. pp. 639-654. The learned Editor in his summing up says that, all things considered, he agrees with the opinion now more commonly held, *viz.*, that the so-called Dionysius was an orthodox Catholic writer, who, by a sort of pious fiction, not indeed laudable, represented himself to be the Areopagite and a disciple of S. Paul. He remarks that it was not unfrequent for writers in early times to veil themselves under great names, and gives as instances the false Decretals, the Apostolic Canons and Constitutions, and various apocryphal works mentioned in the decree of S. Gelasius, the Pastor of Hermas also. These authors seem to have thus acted in a sort of good faith, in order to gain greater esteem, weight and authority for their writings. And as writers, like the pseudo-Dionysius, had no intention craftily to deceive their readers, they were not at much pains to exclude from their works matters by which their later date might be detected, nor cared very much about the discovery of their pious fraud. Various grave authors are of opinion that the works of Dionysius were written after A.D. 431, the date of the Council of Ephesus, and perhaps before 451, the date of that of Chalcedon; and this chiefly on account of certain doctrinal terminology, bearing upon the Nestorian and Monophysite heresies. This last point is however only conjecture, since whatever there is in the writings that might admit of a Monophysite signification, can be well explained in an orthodox sense.

* *De Divin. Nominib.* Cap. iii. Patr. Gr. Tom. 3, p. 681.—This passage has been uniformly interpreted of Our Lady's corporal Assumption. It is quoted with great praise by S. Andrew, Archbishop of Crete, about 635, who wrote three Homilies on the Assumption (*Hom. de Dormit. B. M. V.* i. *Ib.* Tom. 97), and also by S. John Damascene about 730. There is an earlier Homily on the Assumption extant, by S. Modestus, Patriarch of Jerusalem, about 620, and three later by S. Germanus, Patriarch of Constantinople, about 715.

It should be noted that this passage comes in abruptly, and parenthetically; and that the writer, so far from being profuse in his praises of the Blessed Virgin, is singularly silent about her in his works; and, strange to say, assigns to her no place either in his celestial or terrestrial Hierarchy. This would incline us to suppose that what he here relates was no fiction of his own, but came from some common tradition.

In a Council at Rome, A.D. 494, S. Gelasius defined the Canon of the Sacred Scriptures, gave an authentic sanction to the works of several holy Fathers, and in the same decree prohibited certain books, some as heretical, or as more or less containing unorthodox opinions, and others as apocryphal, and groundlessly claiming inspiration; amongst these last was mentioned the book of pseudo-Melito, *De transitu Mariæ*. It is however beyond question that this act of Gelasius implied no doubt as to the doctrinal fact of the Assumption itself. For we can be almost certain that it was already acknowledged in the Gelasian Liturgy, and we know that within a century it was everywhere openly professed, and especially in the Church of Rome itself, when it was incorporated by S. Gregory in his Sacramentary. And surely no one knew better than he the traditions of his own Church.

Some critics are of opinion that the Epistle of pseudo-Jerome to Paula and Eustochium, calling the Assumption into question, was written some time in the latter half of the fifth, or the earlier part of the sixth century.* If this were the case, the appearance of the work under the great name of S. Jerome, who was believed to be its author, together with the condemnation of pseudo-Melito's book, would doubtless have had much influence in raising controversy on Our Lady's corporal Assumption, and retarding its more general acceptance.

It was not until the latter half of the sixth century that the crowning glory of the Blessed Virgin in heaven, which had been so long veiled, came at length into full prominence. Before the close

* Others think that the Epistle belongs to the seventh century, or even later. Their chief and indeed only reason for this seems to be, that in the Epistle the Feast of the Assumption is spoken of as being then celebrated. There is however clear evidence that the Feast was kept in some Churches in Gaul as early as the sixth century. (On the first institution of the Feast of the Assumption, see Migne, Patr. Lat. T. 72, p. 180, p. 244, and *Index*.) We may remark that the account of the Blessed Virgin's death and Assumption, now generally accepted, and as related by S. Andrew of Crete (*viz.*, that her death took place in the house on Mount Sion, and that her sacred body was brought thence to Gethsemane), differs in several important circumstances from that in the apocryphal book of pseudo-Melito condemned by S. Gelasius. This points to another and independent source of tradition.

of this century we have testimony as clear and explicit to her corporal Assumption, and to its recognition as a Catholic truth by the Church, as can be adduced from any subsequent age. Its public teaching found at once a welcome in the hearts of the faithful well-prepared to receive it, as being most congenial to the Catholic instinct, and in complete harmony with all they had ever learnt to believe regarding the Virgin Mother of God. Since then there has been no development of the doctrine.

S. Gregory bishop of Tours (b. 539, d. 596) writes as follows :—

"After the admirable glory of Our Lord's Ascension—now that the head of diabolical wickedness was crushed—had stirred up the minds of the faithful to contemplate the things of heaven, the holy Apostles of Our Lord and Saviour, being gathered together with His Blessed Mother Mary into one house, had all things in common. Nor did any one call anything his own, but each one possessed all things in charity, as we learn from the sacred penman of the Acts of the Apostles. 'They were afterwards scattered abroad through the different countries to preach the word of God. When at length the Blessed Mary had fulfilled the course of this present life, and was now to be called out of the world, all the Apostles were gathered together from the several regions to her house. And as they learnt that she was to be taken from the world, together they watched with her. When, behold the Lord Jesus arrived with His Angels, and, receiving her soul, committed it to the Archangel Michael, and thereupon withdrew. Then at day-break the Apostles lifted her body with the couch, laid it in the sepulchre, and watched by it, awaiting the coming of the Lord. And, lo, the Lord stood by them again, and commanded the holy body to be taken up and borne on a cloud to Paradise; where now united to the soul, and rejoicing in company with the elect, it enjoys the good things of eternity which shall never come to an end." *

The following quotation from the same Saint's writings will not be out of place here, as it serves to illustrate popular devotion to Our Lady's Assumption in his day, and to show that the Feast was then commonly celebrated :—

"The glorious Mother of Christ, who, our faith teaches, was Virgin both before and after her child-birth, had been, as we have already said, translated to paradise amid the singing of angelic choirs, preceded by the Lord. Her basilica built by the Emperor Constantine is splendid by reason of its admirable workmanship. † Hither were brought columns so massive that they

* *De Mirac.* L. i. cap. iv. Patr. Lat. Tom. 71, p. 708.

† The opinion of Tillemont is very probable, that the church here spoken of, was no other than the Cathedral of Ephesus, which, as the Acts of the Council of Ephesus testify, was consecrated in honour of the Virgin Mother of God. No one, before the time of Juvenal in the middle of the fifth century, is recorded to affirm that the Blessed Virgin's sepulchre was at Jerusalem. The earlier notion, at least of some, seems to have been that she died and was buried at Ephesus. This however quite changed in favour of Jerusalem on the discovery of her tomb in Gethsemane, and has since come to be held as a certainty. The miracle related in the text is apposite here, because the church,

could not be raised up, being sixteen feet in girth. Day after day the workmen wearied themselves all in vain. When the holy Virgin appeared in a vision to the architect, saying, 'Be not sad, for I will show thee how these columns may be raised.' She then told him what machinery was to be used, and how the pulleys were to be hung and worked, adding, 'Take to thee three boys from the school, and with their help thou wilt be able to do the business.' The architect on awaking got all ready as he was bid, and calling the three boys, set to, and very soon had the columns raised. The people thus beheld a wonderful miracle, in that what a great many strong men together were unable to raise, three weak little boys had lifted up.

"The Feast [of the Assumption] is celebrated in the middle of the eleventh month.* Now there are relics of Our Lady kept in the Oratory at Marsac in the territory of Avernum. When the Feast was now nigh at hand, I went thither to keep the vigil. And as in the dark of night I approached the Oratory, I saw, whilst still some distance off, a brightness so intense shining through the windows, that one would have thought a very great number of lamps and candles were burning there. Supposing then that some devout persons had already got in before us to celebrate the vigil, I go up to the door. I knock but find there is no one there. Trying the door, I discover that it is locked, and that all is silent. What is to be done? We send for the custodian then in charge of locking the door, to bring the key and unlock it. Whilst he is on his way, we light a candle outside, when, lo, the door opens of itself. On going in, the brightness which we had been wondering at from outside, as our candle makes its appearance, vanishes—I believe, because of the darkness of my sins. We were in fact able to see absolutely nothing else, save the power and virtue of the glorious Virgin, from whom that brightness had arisen." †

Another testimony of the sixth century to our Lady's Assumption is found in a hymn of S. Venantius Fortunatus, Bishop of Poitiers. The hymn which is a long one (482 lines), has for its title: "In praise of Holy Mary, Virgin and Mother of the Lord." In it the poet first brings to view all the Old Testament prophecies, figures, and types, bearing on the Virgin Mother's child-birth and the Blessed Fruit of her womb. He then dilates with wondrous

with which S. Gregory connects it, evidently in his mind bears closely on the Assumption of which he is treating. The Church was in fact, as we should now say, one in honour of Our Lady's Assumption, being built at Ephesus on the supposed site of her sepulchre. See footnote, above, p. 343.

* That is, according to an old way of reckoning, the month of January. It is moreover certain from the most ancient Gallican Liturgies and Martyrologies, as well as from other sources, that the Assumption of Our Lady was originally celebrated on the 18th of January. Nicephorus (L. xvii. c. 28) says that by order of the Emperor Maurice (582-602) the Feast of *the Repose of the Mother of God* was transferred from January to the 15th of August; and on this latter day the Feast was kept in Rome under S. Gregory the Great. The older date however still lingered on in Gaul and other parts for some time. It may be well to remark that the terms *Pausatio*, *Dormitio* (κοίμησις), *Transitus*, *Assumptio* (ἀνάληψις), were used at that period indiscriminately for the same event.

† *Ibid.* Cap. ix. p. 713.

fulness on her praises, and the homage paid to her by the heavenly hosts and by all creation. Lastly he dwells upon her triumph and glory in paradise.

Though S. Fortunatus does not explicitly make mention of the fact of Mary's corporal Assumption to heaven — and his theme no way leads him to do so—yet he evidently implies that she is there in body as well as in soul. To take his words in any other sense would be wholly to destroy their meaning and force. For as Jesus Christ was crowned King of heaven, as Son of Mary, clothed in that same flesh which He had taken from her, so her whole dignity and glory in heaven, as His Mother, consists in her having given of her own flesh to Him. Hence she too is crowned Queen of heaven in that self-same body whereof He became Incarnate. And because the Divine Word was on His Ascension glorified in heaven as man, even as Mary's Son; she likewise must make her entrance into heaven, that she may be there duly glorified as His true Mother, not in soul only, but in her body also. Such thoughts as these underlie the poet's entire argument. But the reader can judge for himself, as at the close of this chapter we append a long extract from the last part of the hymn together with an English rendering.

But besides patristic testimony to the explicit teaching and belief in the sixth century of Our Lady's Assumption, we have the express witness of the Church's Liturgy to the same effect. And this is of far greater moment and value than the statement of any individual Fathers.

It will serve our purpose here to borrow for our summary on this point, a passage from an able writer in the *Dublin Review*.*

"The Sacramentaries are at once the most authentic and the most explicit witnesses to Mary's privilege. The Mozarabic Missal, the Gallican, Gothic, and Gregorian, perhaps also the Gelasian and even the Leonine Sacramentaries, proclaim in various forms of speech, but in one and the same sense, the triumph of the Virgin Mother over death and corruption. In them all her passage is spoken of as 'a hidden thing, without parallel among men. She died indeed, but only for a time. Her virginal flesh was superior to the dissolution of the tomb. The bands of death were unable to hold in their embrace the immaculate flesh of her who was at once a Virgin and a Mother, nor any rock shut in that Mother whose child-bearing had been painless.'† This is the teaching of the Liturgical monuments of the whole Western Church. The documents themselves reach back to the sixth century, and very probably to the fifth. Their similarity refers them to a common origin, which was no

* *The Assumption of the B. V. M., an Apostolical Tradition*, October, 1870, p. 408.

† Mabillon, *Mus. Ital.*, p. 301.

other than the common faith of all ; their completeness shows that when they were written that faith was no novelty. . . . The Mass for the festival, in the Gregorian Sacramentary is inscribed in some MSS. *Assumptio S. Mariæ*, in others, *Pausatio S. Mariæ*. In some the prayer *Veneranda* is read on the vigil, and *Famulorum* (the modern prayer) on the feast. . . . The prayer *Veneranda* runs thus: 'May this day's worshipful festival, O Lord, bear to us saving aid. On this day the holy Mother of God underwent a temporary death, yet could she not be kept down by the bands of death, because she bore Thy Son, Our Lord made flesh from her.' Here we have asserted, in express terms, the resurrection of Our Lady before her body had had time to suffer dissolution, and the reason of that privilege, *viz.*, the intimate union of her flesh with that of the Son of God.

"The Secret prayer, the same as that in the present Roman Missal, is as follows:—

"'May, O Lord, the prayer of the Mother of God come to the aid of Thy people: for although we know that in accordance with the law of flesh, she has passed from hence, yet are we sensible that in heavenly glory she is interceding for us with Thee.' Here it is plainly intimated that the Blessed Virgin really died; and that notwithstanding her death, she is certainly now in the glory of heaven interceding for us with God, both in body and soul. Any interpretation short of this, that is, Our Lady's integral Assumption to heaven, would give a sense to the prayer, unmeaning and irrelevant. For it would be superfluous that the Church should express so emphatically her belief—as though of something more than ordinary—that the Blessed Virgin, though deceased, is in soul in heaven, there interceding for us, whilst her body still remains here on earth, since this is common to all the blessed alike.

"Whilst the Gallican and other Liturgies are more profuse in detailing the circumstances of the Assumption, that of Rome is more important and valuable, not only as reflecting the teaching of so eminent a Father and Doctor as S. Gregory who authoritatively sanctioned it, but also as witnessing to the Faith of the Roman Church—for who would know better the traditional doctrines and practices of his own Church than that great Pope? Speaking of S. Gregory's Sacramentary John the Deacon his biographer says: 'He compiled into one book the Missal of Gelasius, making many omissions, a few changes, and some additions.'" *

The glory of Our Lady's Assumption which thus burst forth so brightly towards the close of the sixth century, has from that time never waned. It soon gathered fresh lustre from the writings of S. Germanus of Constantinople, S. Andrew of Crete, and S. John Damascene. True it is that in the next succeeding centuries it was still doubted and controverted in some quarters of the West. But this opposition, which arose in the scientific discussion of the question, was but partial and hesitating. It was doubtless in some measure due to the great influence of S. Jerome's name, on whom had been fathered—according to some in the seventh or eighth century, according to others in the fifth

* L. ii. 17.

or sixth—the spurious Epistle to Paula and Eustochium casting doubt on the matter, which was for a long time generally believed to have been written by the Saint. In course of time, however, the Catholic truth of Mary's corporal Assumption bore down all such partial opposition in the West. Already in the seventh century it was celebrated as a feast of the first rank by the Roman Church, for we find S. Sergius I. decreeing in 689 that "on the Annunciation, the Nativity of Our Lord, and the *Repose* of the ever-Virgin Mary, the Litany should start from S. Hadrian's, and be met by the faithful at S. Mary's." * S. Nicholas I. (859) testifies that the Feast had been kept from ancient time in the same way as Easter, Pentecost, and Christmas, with fast and vigil.† And in 847 Leo IV. first added an Octave to the festival.‡

We read moreover, that in the eighth and ninth centuries the Feast of Our Lady's Assumption was ordered to be observed as a festival of obligation by provincial or national Councils in England, in the Frankish empire, and in parts of Germany. §

It is unnecessary to speak of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin in the East, where from the time of its first explicit teaching it has been entirely unopposed, and is still professed by the Oriental schismatics. To this Cyril Lucar's Homily on the decease of the Mother of God, preached by him as patriarch before the clergy and people of Constantinople, bears ample witness; as also its adoption by the Synod of Jerusalem in 1672, under the patriarch Dositheus.

The historical retrospect of the doctrine of Our Lady's integral Assumption during the first six centuries which we have now completed, will enable us to admire the wisdom of divine providence that delayed so long the full recognition of Mary's glory in heaven. The Church throughout that period was "contending earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints." || During its latter half a bitter war was being waged against the Incarnate Word Himself by Arians, Nestorians and Eutychians, who assailed in turn His eternal Godhead, and the reality of His Incarnation, by denying the one Divine Person and the two distinct Natures in Our Lord Jesus Christ. Over all these heretics the Church triumphed by the definitions of faith which she made at Nicæa, Ephesus, and Chalcedon.

* Anast. Biblioth. *in Sergium Papam.*
† Coleti, *Conc. Coll.* Tom. ix. p. 1536.
‡ Anastas. Biblioth. *In Leon.* iv.
§ Coleti, Tom. viii. p. 312, ix. p. 337, viii. p. 324. || *Jude* 3.

Now there would surely have been a certain unfitness, ill according with the due proportion of faith, had the Blessed Virgin been proposed as an object of veneration to the faithful in all the fulness of that heavenly glory with which the teaching of her Assumption has since invested her, whilst at the same time the essential claims of her Divine Son were in jeopardy, and His own rightful titles and prerogatives had not as yet been formally proclaimed by the Church, nor explicitly believed by her children. The supreme throne of infinite majesty must needs be first prepared in heaven for Jesus Christ, as true God and true Man, and be secured on all points in the Church's faith and worship, before Mary's place there could be duly apportioned. Her claims had to remain some time in abeyance, until those of her Divine Son were properly adjusted. Yet, meanwhile, each new victory won for Him, and every fresh title of dignity that He thence acquired, reflected its lustre on her: for by the exaltation of the Son, His Mother's glory was enhanced. But then, and then only, when the King's throne was seen established in the light inaccessible of the heaven of heavens, was a place at His right hand found for the Queen;* and "the new sphere was discovered in the realms of light to which the Church had not as yet assigned its inhabitant,"† but wherein she now beheld Mary in that very same flesh with which she had clothed the Eternal Word, and to whom as His Mother she, of all creatures, is the nearest. Then what David uttered in prophecy was verified in the vision of Christian faith: *Arise, O Lord, into Thy resting-place; Thou and the Ark which Thou hast sanctified.*‡

The belief of Our Lady's corporal Assumption which has prevailed throughout the Church for more than thirteen hundred years, we must bear well in mind, rests not, for its foundation, on the recorded discovery of her tomb in the fifth century, nor on any pious accounts of her holy death and interment that obtained credence—since the actual truth of details of this sort, however probable, is after all more or less uncertain. But as an Anglican writer, speaking of the story of the Assumption says: "The belief was never founded on that story. The story was founded on the belief. The belief which was universal, required a defined shape, and that shape at length it found."§ Whilst the belief

* 1 *Tim.* vi. 15, 16. *Ps.* xliv. 11.

† Newman's *Development*, etc., ch. iv. sect. ii. 8. ‡ *Ps.* cxxxi. 8.

§ Mozley, *Reminiscences of Oriel College and the Oxford Movement*, vol. ii. p. 36.

itself was based on the foundation of Holy Scripture and Catholic tradition, as these are interpreted and sanctioned by the general teaching of the Church. We refer here especially to the vision of the woman in heaven recorded by S. John in the Apocalypse, and to the ancient and universal tradition of Mary as the Second Eve.

It may be said with truth that the Church of later days—in consequence of the experimental knowledge she has acquired from her successive definitions of faith, the teaching of her ordinary Magisterium, and the progress of theological science—stands on a vantage ground, compared with that of former times, for discerning and explaining what was at first only obscurely seen to be contained in the revealed deposit. For as the exact sense and full meaning of an author's earlier works may be often best determined by his later writings, so, may we say, it is also in this case. For the Holy Ghost is Author not only of Scripture and Tradition, the Church's two great rules of faith, but also of her definitions of faith, and living doctrinal teaching in every age. And in the light of these later utterances of the Divine Spirit the Church is able to understand more fully and clearly many truths of His original revelation.

Though Our Lady's corporal Assumption is not a dogma of faith, and many theologians are of opinion that there is not sufficient testimony in Scripture or Tradition for its infallible definition; yet a Catholic who should wilfully doubt of its truth would not only be deemed guilty of very great rashness, but also incur the suspicion of heresy; for by such doubt he would hold, at least implicitly, that the Church of Christ might err in a doctrine which she everywhere believes and teaches.

But not a few eminent theologians, of recent date especially, maintain that the Catholic truth of Our Lady's integral Assumption is proximately definable, not only as being contained, at least implicitly, in the revealed deposit, but also because its scientific development is fully accepted and sanctioned by the Church's authentic Magisterium, and the doctrine has the consentient belief of all the faithful at the present time, and has had the same adhesion for many centuries past. On these grounds it is argued that the doctrine of the Assumption, as universally understood by the Church, was part of the original revelation made to the Apostles, and is proximately definable. Petitions were in fact made for its definition at the time of the Vatican Council.

But how, it may be asked, can the doctrine of the Assumption be an Apostolical tradition, concerning which there was a silence

of several centuries? To this objection we will reply in the words of a writer from whom we have already largely quoted.

"We must distinguish between a tradition in itself, and the mode of its preservation. A tradition, to be apostolic, must have existed in the Church from the beginning. But its outward manifestation is by no means necessary in all ages. Still less is it necessary, at any given period, to be able to show evidence of its having been explicitly taught, or even believed, in each succeeding age. This would be to require, as part of the divine scheme, the existence and preservation, through all time, of written records of every age sufficient to attest each particular doctrine; a requirement altogether contrary to the genius of the Christian revelation, which was to be handed down from generation to generation by articulately speaking men; and no less contrary to the actual course of God's providence, which has permitted the greater portion of the records of whole centuries to perish. It is conceivable therefore, and even to be expected, that for reasons purely extrinsic and accidental, this or that apostolic tradition had left no traces of its existence during an indefinite period. And this might be true of a tradition openly professed throughout its course. *A fortiori* a tradition imparted but to few, or only in germ, wrapped up in recondite analogies of faith, and not brought into prominence by early contradiction, might lie in obscurity for centuries and yet be there, until at last brought to the surface, perhaps by an event which looks like an accident. The Assumption was just one of these traditions. The fact was explicitly told the Church by the Apostles, and was implied in other truths by their ministry revealed. The recollection of the fact was buried in the ruins of Jerusalem, which covered the empty tomb. The necessary readiness of mind to accept the fact when afterwards brought again to light, was preserved by the explicit belief of the connected truths. The finding of the tomb in the fifth century was the providential occasion of the promulgation of the doctrine which had to wait for universal acceptance only until its bearings had been fully mastered." *

APPENDIX.

1.

Venantius Fortunatus, an Italian by birth, was born in the first half of the sixth century. His studies made at Ravenna, he went whilst still a young man to Tours, most probably as a pilgrim to the tomb of S. Martin, to whom he had from his earliest years a very special devotion. He was induced by Queen Radegunda, who had already embraced the religious life, to remain in Gaul, where he was ordained priest. As almoner and director of Radegunda and her sisters in religion, he resided many years at Poitiers where she had founded a large monastery. Eventually he was in 599 made bishop of that see which he ruled until his death in 609. S. Fortunatus was a man not only of great holiness and piety, but also of talent, high culture, and wide erudition. At Tours he formed a warm and lasting friendship with S. Gregory the bishop. He must have possessed very amiable and engaging qualities of heart and

* *Dublin Review*, October, 1870, p. 421.

mind, for he seems to have won the affectionate esteem of all those who were then in Gaul most eminent both in the Church and State. To this no doubt his relations with the holy Queen Radegunda also contributed. S. Fortunatus devoted the time he could spare from other duties to literary occupation, and especially to writing hymns and poetry. That he was no mean poet is evident from the fact that several of the Breviary hymns which are still most prized, have come from his pen. These are the two Hymns for Passion-tide, "Vexilla Regis prodeunt," and "Pange, lingua, gloriosi Lauream certaminis"; also the three hymns for Feasts of the Blessed Virgin, "Ave Maris Stella," "Quem terra, pontus, sidera," and, "O gloriosa virginum." Throughout his life he

IN LAUDEM SANCTÆ MARIÆ VIRGINIS ET MATRIS DOMINI.

* * * * * * * *

Nomen honoratum, benedicta Maria per ævum,
Ad laudem Artificis nobilis artis opus:
Dulcis et angelico pretioso puella relatu,
Omnes ultra homines dona decoris habens.
Inde rubore rosas, candore hinc lilia vincens,
Flos novus e terra, quem polus arce colat.
Nix premitur candore tuo, sol crinis honore,
Pallescunt radii, Virgo, decore tui.

* * * * * * * *

Dignus ager Domini, generans sine semine frugem.

* * * * * * * *

In Deitate Patri æqualis, sed corpore Matri,
Et sine peccato de Genitrice Caro.

* * * * * * * *

Cujus honore sacro, Genitrix, transcendis Olympum,
Et super astrigeros erigis ora polos,
Conderis in solio felix Regina superbo,
Cingeris et niveis, lactea Virgo, choris.
Nobile nobilior circumsistente senatu,
Consulibus celsis celsior ipsa sedes.
Sic juxta Genitum Regem Regina perennem,
Ornata ex partu Mater opima tuo.
Occurrunt proceres, et gloria magna Joannes,
Notus et ante Deum, quam pateretur homo.
Fratribus adscitis, Paulo, reliquisque beatis,
Doctor apostolicus, fulgida palma, Petrus.

* * * * * * * *

Qui omnes obrizo ornati super astra coruscant.
Si sic discipuli, quid pia Mater erit?
Hinc patriarcharum numero sociante, prophetæ
Conveniunt celso munera ferre throno.
Martyrii hinc atque inde cohors redemita coronis,
Principe cum Stephano civica turba poli.

was eminent for his tender piety. His devotion to the Saints led him to write a long metrical Life of S. Martin of Tours, and Lives in prose of several holy Bishops and Martyrs in Gaul, and also of S. Radegunda. Before composing their Lives, he was careful to visit their shrines, and the various places where they had lived and laboured, thus to gather up all the traditional memories of them then remaining. These many pious pilgrimages both before and after his coming to Gaul, and his large acquaintance with persons eminent for holiness and learning, render the testimony of S. Fortunatus, in all that regards Catholic tradition, doctrines, and devotions, of exceptional value as coming from a man of culture, who had seen much of men and things.

IN PRAISE OF THE HOLY VIRGIN MARY AND MOTHER OF OUR LORD.

Hail Mary, honoured Name, for ever blest:
Work to thy Maker's praise, His master-piece.
Hail Maiden, by those words angelical,
Of priceless worth, to us become most sweet;
With gifts of beauty dowered beyond compare;
Lovelier than roses red, or lilies white;
New flower from earth for heaven to eulogise.
Thy fairness passes snow of dazzling white;
Thy tresses' glory casts the sun in shade,
And rays of light thy virgin beauty pales.
God-worthy field, unsown, thou yieldest fruit,
E'en Him, who equal to the Father is,
In Deity, in body like to thee,
His Mother, from whom He is sinless flesh.
To augment His praise thou climb'st Olympus' steep,
Liftest thy face above the starry heavens,
Sit'st on thy throne superb a happy Queen,
The Virgin fair, girt round with snow-white choirs;
More noble than the noble senate near,
Than consuls high, thyself sit'st higher still.
Next to Him born of thee, the Eternal King,
Enthroned thou art as Queen, O Mother rich,
E'en by thy child-birth wealthily adorned.
Lo, come the Chiefs. First in great glory, John,
To God foreknown, ere suffered He as man.
And then with Paul, and all his brethren blest,
Peter, their prince and doctor, shining palm:
Clad all in purest gold, more bright than stars—
If thus disciples what must the Mother be?
See here the patriarchs and prophets join,
Their gifts presenting at thy lofty throne.
Lo there the Martyr cohort girt with crowns;
Stephen their prince: the civic crowd of heaven.

Primitiæ florum Bethlemitica passio lactans,
Quæ meruit nascens vivere morte magis.
Italiæ mundique caput quos Roma retentat,
Urbs vel Alexandri, aut Antiochenus ager,
Quos Hierosolymis, aut quos Byzantion oris,
Quos Patra, quos Ephesus, Maddaver arce tenet,
Quos Oriens, Occasus habet, quos Africa et Arctos,
Quosque sepultat humus, cingit et Oceanus;
Natio, gens, populus, regiones, agmina, reges,
Undique currentes ad nova dona Patris.
Æthiopes, Thraces, Arabes, Dacus, Indus, Alanus,
Aurora, et Vesper, Persa, Britannus adest.
* * * * * * * *
Horum ante adventum te qualiter ornat Amator,
Parturiit quem uterus, Virgo beata, tuus?
Dans tibi larga poli, cui tu domus arcta fuisti,
Ventris pro hospitio restituendo thronum.
Componendo caput niveum diademate fulvo,
Et gemmis rutilans, comit honore comam;
Annectens niveo pretiosa monilia collo,
Fulgore et vario pectora pura tegens.
Quam speciosum humeris imponit honoris amictum,
Splendore ardescens purpura tincta nitet!
* * * * * * * *
Quodque oculus non vidit agens, non audiit auris,
Ornamenta tibi hæc, pia Virgo, nitent.
Cum regio ergo poli, totusque exercitus astri,
Te ornatam inspiciant, laudibus ora movent.
Incipiens Michael præconia ferre Beatæ,
Cumque suis turmis, hæc tibi, Virgo, refert:
"O decus excellens, O Femina, forma salutis,
Partus fruge potens, virginitate placens!
Per quam est se nasci dignata Redemptio mundi,
Et reparare genus quod tulit Eva ferox.
Hanc tibi, Mater, opem legionum millia mille,
Per classes resonant carmine, voce, lyra."
Angelus inde tuos repetit paranymphus honores,
Qui tibi de cœlis nuntia sancta vehit;
Dicens: "O felix, imitari nescia Virgo,
Cujus et agnus ovis conterit ora lupi,
Tartara disrumpens, patriæ captiva reducens,
Et libertati post juga pressa refers."
Excipit has iterum ingeminans pars altera laudes,
Perstrepit et cunctis vox revoluta choris.
Incipit inde alios producere terra favores,
Zachariæ genitus, vox, tuba, præco, sonus,

And there those earliest buds of passion-flower,
The suckling holocaust of Bethlehem,
That earned at birth, by dying, deathless life.
From Rome they come, the world's metropolis;
From Alexandria, and from Antioch;
These from Jerusalem, Byzantium;
From Patra, Ephesus, and Maddaver.
E'en all from East, or West, or South, or North,
Whose bodies buried lie in earth or sea;
Of various race whole nations, armies, kings,
Run to the Father's gifts of marvel new;
And men from every land of morn or eve,
Arabia, Persia, Thrace, Ind, Britain, meet.
But ere they come, how does that Lover, whom
Thy womb erst bore, array thee, Virgin blest?
Largely of heaven He gives thee, who to Him
Once wert a straightened home; in recompense
For thy womb's hospitality, a throne:
Crowns thy fair brow with aureate diadem,
With sparkling gems tricks out thy golden hair,
Circles thy snow-white neck with necklace rare,
Covers thy breasts all-pure with dazzling sheen;
Such beauteous robe of honour vests thee with,
Its purple dye with burning splendour glows.
Such, as no eye hath seen, nor ear heard tell,
Are, holy Virgin, these thy ornaments;
So that when Heaven, and all its starry hosts
Gaze on thy grace, they raise their voice to praise.
Michael beginning, with his serried troops,
These plaudits offers to thy maiden Name:
"O paragon of beauty, Woman blest,
Salvation's form, potent by child-birth's Fruit,
Pleasing to God through thy virginity:
By thee the world's Redemption to be born
Hath deigned, and thus repair the race of man,
Which cruel Eve by sin had led astray.
This succouring aid, O Mother, due to thee
A thousand thousand legions, through their ranks,
Loudly proclaim with hymn, and voice, and lyre."
The Bridal Angel next takes up the strain,
Who brought of yore from heaven the holy news:
"O happy one, Virgin inimitable,
Sheep of that Lamb, who the wolf's jaws hath crushed:
In bursting Tartarus, thou bringest home
Captives to father-land, and hast restored
Souls, kept in durance vile, to liberty."
Now all on either side swell forth the praise,
That in full chorus rolls from choir to choir.
Then Earth in turn begins applauses new;
And Zach'ry's son, voice, trumpet, herald, sound—

Cum Petro et Stephano, ducibusque in millibus amplis
Agminibus, mistis plausibus alta canens:
"O Virgo insignis, benedicta ad gaudia nata,
Auxilium terræ, fulgor honorque poli,
Ecce tuus florens uterus quæ præstitit orbi,
Te pariente fide, nos paradisus habet.
Quid sumus, aut fuimus? quos merserat Eva profundum,
De limo in cælum nos facit ire sinu."
Laudibus his, Domini Genitrix, fragor intonat astris,
Militiæque poli hæc tibi clangor agit.
Ast ego ferre volens, videor subducere laudes,
Nam tibi quisque cupit voce favere sacræ.
Mens oret Genitum, sic Matri digna loquatur,
Cujus amore pio vivis honore novo.
Pulchra super gemmas, splendorem solis obumbrans,
Alta super cœlos, et super astra nitens,
Vellere candidior niveo, rutilantior aura,
Fulgidior radio, dulcior ore favo,
Suavior, et roseo nimium rubicundior ostro,
Vincis aromaticas mentis odore comas.
Cara, benigna, micans, pia, sancta, verenda, venusta;
Flos, decus, ara, nitor, palma, corona, pudor;
Per quam omnes fines terræ meruere salutem,
Gaudet et orbs totus, pontus, arena, polus,
Hæc tibi qui indignus quamvis corde, ore susurro,
Spes mihi sis veniæ, quæ vehis orbis opem.*

* Venantius Fortunatus, Opp. P. I. L. viii. c. 7, Patr. Lat. Tom. 88, pp. 281-4.

With Peter, Stephen, and the leaders all,
Each in his full battalion myriad-fold—
High o'er their mingled lauds, his voice uplifts:
"O peerless Virgin, born for joys of bliss,
Help of the earth, lustre and pride of heaven!
Lo, how thy flowering womb the world hath blest!
Since to thy bringing-forth in faith we owe
That paradise now holds us denizens.
What are we, or what were we rather? Those
Whom Eve so deep in ruin whelmed; and thou
Hast in thy bosom borne from the mire to heaven."
Thus in thy honour, Mother of God, resound
Through all the starry sphere, shouts of applause,
As crashing thunder-claps, or battle's roar.
But I, alas, wishing to add my meed—
For who'd not fain thy sacred Name extol?—
Seem from thy praises only to detract.
Who for the Mother would speak worthily,
Let him beseech the Son,* for Whose dear love
Thou liv'st henceforth in this thy glory new.
Beyond all gems in beauty, the sun in splendour paling,
Raised higher than the heavens, in lustre stars outshining,
More white than snowy fleeces, more ruddy than the morning,
Glistening more bright than sunbeam, to thought than honey sweeter:
O passing sweet! Thy cheek of lovelier tint than roses—
To spirit's sense more fragrant than all Arabia's perfumes.
Kind, debonair, benignant, holy, majestic, beauteous;
Palm-crown, of grace rich altar, of modesty fair flower:
Through thee earth's farthest limits have merited salvation,
In thee the universe of heav'n, land, and sea, rejoices.
To thee this hymn I offer, unworthy though I be,
Do thou, of all the succour, be pardon's hope to me.

2.

From S. John Damascene:—†

"See, beloved fathers and brethren, what things this glorious sepulchre holds forth to us. For that these things are so, is evident from what is written in the Euthymian history, Book the third, Chapter the fortieth, word for word, as follows: 'It has been already said that the holy Pulcheria built many

* S. Jerome, before undertaking the defence of Our Lady's Virginity, against Helvidius, writes: "Hence I must invoke the Holy Ghost, that by my mouth, in His sense He will defend the virginity of Blessed Mary. I must invoke the Lord Jesus, that He will guard from all suspicion of violation the hospice of that sacred womb wherein He dwelt for ten months. I must implore God the Father too, that He will show the Mother of His Son to have been Virgin after child-birth, she who was Mother before being married." *Advers. Helvid. de perpet. Virginit. B. Mariæ*, n. 2.

† Hom. ii. 18. *In Dormit. B. V. M.* Patr. Gr. Tom. 96, pp. 747-752.

churches to Christ at Constantinople. Of these there is one which was erected in Blachernæ, at the beginning of the reign of Marcian of divine memory. When then Marcian and Pulcheria had built there a venerable temple to the glorious and most holy Mother of God and ever-Virgin Mary, and embellished it with every adornment, they sought to have her most holy body which had received God. Having sent for Juvenal, the Archbishop of Jerusalem, and the bishops of Palestine, who were residing for the time in the capital on account of the Synod then held at Chalcedon, they said to him, "We hear that there is at Jerusalem the first and celebrated church of the most holy Mother of God and ever-Virgin Mary in the spot called Gethsemane, and there her body which bore the life is deposited in a coffin. We wish, therefore, her relics to be brought hither for the protection of this royal city." But Juvenal answered, "In the holy and divinely-inspired Scripture, indeed, nothing is recorded of the departure of the holy Mary, Mother of God. But from an ancient and most true tradition we have received that at the time of her glorious Falling-asleep, all the holy Apostles, who were going through the world for the salvation of the nations, were in a moment of time raised in the air and brought together to Jerusalem; and when they were near her, they had a vision of angels, and divine melody of the excelling powers was heard; and thus with divine and more than heavenly glory, she rendered her holy soul into the hands of God in an unspeakable manner. Now her body that had received God, being borne forth with angelic and apostolic psalmody and with funeral rites, was deposited in a coffin at Gethsemane. In this place the chorus and singing of the angels continued for three days. But after the third day, on the angelic music ceasing—since one of the Apostles, Thomas, had been absent, and came after the third day, and wished to venerate the body that had received God—the Apostles who were present opened the coffin; but the body, worthy-of-all-praise, they were wholly unable to find. And when they found laid there her grave-clothes only, and were filled with the ineffable fragrance that came from them, they made the coffin secure. Being astonished at the marvel of the mystery, they could come to no other conclusion, but that He who had vouchsafed in His own person to become incarnate and to be made man from her, and to be born in flesh God the Word and Lord of Glory, and who after her child-birth had preserved her virginity immaculate—Himself had been pleased, after her departure hence from life, to honour her undefiled and stainless body with incorruption, and translation before the common and universal resurrection."'

"Now there were present at the time with the Apostles the most honoured Timothy, apostle and first bishop of Ephesus, and Dionysius the Areopagite, as the great Dionysius himself testifies in what he wrote with such pains to the said Timothy concerning the blessed Hierotheus who was also present, where he thus speaks: 'When, in presence also of our divinely-inspired sacred prelates themselves, both we, and as thou knowest, he (Hierotheus) too, and many of our holy brethren were come together to behold the body that gave the principle of life, there were present also James the Lord's brother, and Peter the supreme and most venerable summit of the theologians. It was then agreed after the sight that all the holy prelates, as each was able, should hymn forth the infinite goodness of divine omnipotence.*

* According to another reading: "The infinite goodness of divinely supreme weakness," as it is in Dionysius, *De Divin. Nom.* iii. 2, P. G. Tom. 3,

"'After the theologians, he (Hierotheus), as thou knowest, surpassed all the other holy ecclesiastics, being quite carried away, all in ecstasy, and feeling wrapped up in the praises he was hymning; and was looked upon by all who heard or saw him, whether they knew him or not, as a divinely inspired psalmodist. But why should I speak to thee who knowest what was there divinely uttered, since, unless I have forgotten mine own self, I know that I have often heard from thee some parts of those same inspired canticles?'

"This when their Majesties had heard, they asked of the Archbishop Juvenal, that the sacred coffin, together with the grave-clothes of Mary, the glorious and most holy Mother of God, contained therein, should be sent to them securely sealed. And on receiving it, they placed it in the revered church of the holy Mother of God that was built in Blachernæ."

3.

From the Epistle to Paula and Eustochium on the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, written under the name of S. Jerome:—*

". . . If an apocryphal book entitled *De Transitu Virginis* should perchance come into your hands, and you might take what is doubtful for certain [I wish you to know that it is] a work which many Latins, from their love of piety and fondness for reading, accept too readily, especially since nothing on the matter can be known as certain, except that to-day the Blessed Virgin departed in glory from her body. Her sepulchre, indeed, is shown, and we saw it ourselves not long ago in the midst of the valley of Josaphat which lies between Mount Sion and Mount Olivet; and thou, too, Paula, hast seen it with thine own eyes, as well as the church built there in her honour, paved with a wondrous kind of stone, wherein she is proclaimed by all to have been buried, as you are aware. I say so much because many of our friends are in doubt whether Mary was assumed together with her body, or departed leaving her body behind. But how, at what time, or by whom, her most holy body was thence taken away, or whither transferred, or whether she rose again, is unknown; although some would affirm that she is already raised again to life, and clothed with Christ in unchangeable bliss. This too a great many assert also of blessed John the Evangelist, His [or her, ejus] minister, to whom as a virgin the Virgin was committed by Christ; because, as is reported only manna is found in his tomb, and is also seen to flow thence. Our best course however is to commit the whole matter to God, to whom nothing is impossible, rather than to wish to settle anything rashly by our own authority whereof we should not approve.

p. 681. S. Andrew, Archbishop of Crete, also has τῆς θεαρχικῆς ἀσθένειας. *In Dormit. Mariæ i.* *Pb.* T. 97, p. 1062. Some refer this to the Mother of God when was seen her dead body; others to O. L. J. C., become weakness by His Incarnation.

* *Ep.* ix. Int. Opp., S. Hieron. Patr. Lat. Tom. 30, p. 122. Suarez says that this Epistle could not have been written by Sophronius the contemporary of S. Jerome, as it makes mention of the Nestorian and Eutychian heresies. Baronius calls the author "an egregious forger of lies." S. Jerome in speaking of the writings of Melito does not refer to the apocryphal work under that author's name.

"In fact the case is parallel with that of those who, we believe from the testimony of the Gospel, rose again with Our Lord. For whether they returned to dust of earth again, we have no certainty, since all we read is: *And the graves were opened: and many bodies of the Saints that had slept arose, and coming out of the tombs after His resurrection, came into the holy city, and appeared to many.** Now concerning these some doctors were of opinion, and have also left recorded in their writings, that the resurrection was in their case lasting and complete. For they affirm that these would not have been really true witnesses unless their resurrection were also a true one. Hence, too, we read that blessed Peter said, when speaking in testimony of David: *And his sepulchre is with us*,† as though he would not venture to say, he, or his body is with us, but only the sepulchre wherein he was buried. From this they say that he rose again with the other saints: and hence his mausoleum is seen to have remained empty, as that also of Blessed Mary. They bring also other passages of Scripture in confirmation that this really happened, and that they are now reigning, raised again to life, in everlasting union with Christ. And that this—for nothing is impossible to God—happened in the case of the Blessed Virgin Mary we do not deny; though for caution's sake, and not to do any prejudice to faith (salva fide), we should rather hold as an opinion with pious desire, than unadvisedly define what we may be ignorant about without peril (quod sine periculo nescitur)."

4.

From the Chronicle of Eusebius, 6th year of Claudius, 15th after the Crucifixion:—

"The Virgin Mary, Mother of Jesus Christ is assumed to her Son to heaven, as some write was revealed to them." ‡

5.

S. Willibald, nephew to S. Boniface the Apostle of Germany, is the first recorded English pilgrim to the Holy Land (about 754 A.D.). He was afterwards bishop of Eichstadt. Two accounts of his pilgrimage have come down to us. The *Hodœporicon* was written by an English nun of the Abbey of Heidenheim, founded by S. Boniface—to whom she was related—and presided over by S. Walburga. This account was made from the dictation of S. Willibald himself. The other, called the *Itinerary*, was written, apparently from memory, by one of the deacons or companions of the Saint, whose name has not been preserved. From these we make the following extracts:— §

* *Matt.* xxvii. 52, 53. † *Acts* ii. 23. See *supra*, pp. 347-9.

‡ A later addition to the original. This would make Our Lady's age to be 63, whereas most probably it was 73 years.

§ Palestine Pilgrims' Text Society. *The Hodœporicon* of S. Willibald, and the *Itinerary*, translated by Rev. Canon Brownlow, etc., 1891.

XX.—The Column in Memory of the place where the Jews wished to carry off the Body of Holy Mary; her Translation in Holy Sion.

"Likewise, he also said, that before the gate of the city there stood a high column, and on the top of the column stands a cross, for a sign and a memorial of the place where the Jews wished to carry away the body of holy Mary. When the eleven Apostles took up the body of holy Mary, they carried it from Jerusalem, and soon as they came to the gate of the city the Jews wished to seize it. Immediately those men put forth their arms towards the bier and tried to take it, their arms were held, and they stuck to the bier, and were unable to move, until by the grace of God and the prayers of the Apostles they were loosed again, and then they left them. Holy Mary departed out of the world in that place in the midst of Jerusalem, which is called holy Sion. And now the eleven Apostles carried her, as I said before, and then angels came and took her from the hands of the Apostles, and carried her into Paradise." *

XXI.—The Valley of Josaphat, the Church and Tomb of Holy Mary. . . .

"And going down from thence, Bishop Willibald came to the valley of Josaphat. It is situated near the city of Jerusalem, on the Eastern side. And in that valley is the church of holy Mary, and in the church is her sepulchre—not that her body rests there, but for a memorial of her. There he prayed, and went up to Mount Olivet. . . ." †

"At length they went out [of the city] and came into the valley of Josaphat, where the tomb of holy Mary is shown. But whether the Apostles buried her there when released from her body left here below, or whether perhaps purposing to bury her, after they had dug out the tomb there, she was assumed with her body [into heaven]; or if after being buried she was hidden there, whether she was taken thence and translated elsewhere, or having received true immortality she has risen again, it is better to be in doubt than to define anything apocryphal. Crossing over from thence, Mount Olivet received them. . . ." ‡

6.

Apocryphal Writings:—

"And then the face of the Mother of the Lord shone brighter than the light, and she rose up and blessed each of the apostles with her own hand, and all gave glory to God; and the Lord stretched forth His undefiled hands, and received her holy and blameless soul. And with the departure of her blameless soul the place was filled with perfume and ineffable light; and, behold, a voice out of the heavens was heard, saying: Blessed art thou among women. And Peter, and I John, and Paul, and Thomas, ran and wrapped up her precious feet for the consecration; and the twelve Apostles put her precious and holy body upon a couch, and carried it. And, behold, while they were carrying her, a certain well-born Hebrew, Jephonias by name, running against the body, put his hands upon the couch; and behold, an angel of the Lord by invisible power, with a sword of fire, cut off his two

* Most of the accounts of the Assumption state that the body of the Blessed Virgin was buried in the tomb mentioned in the next chapter; and that, when that tomb was opened some days afterwards it was found empty.

† *The Hodœporicon*, p. 21. ‡ *The Itinerary*, p. 46.

hands from his shoulders, and made them hang about the couch, lifted up in the air. And at this miracle which had come to pass all the people of the Jews who beheld it cried out: Verily, He that was brought forth by thee is the true God, O Mother of God, ever-Virgin Mary. And Jephonias himself, when Peter ordered him, that the wonderful things of God might be showed forth, stood up behind the couch, and cried out: *Holy Mary, who broughtest forth Christ who is God, have mercy upon me.* And Peter turned and said to him: In the name of Him who was born of her, thy hands which have been taken from thee, will be fixed on again. And immediately, at the word of Peter, the hands hanging by the couch of the Lady came, and were fixed on Jephonias. And he believed, and glorified Christ. God who had been born of her.

"And when this miracle had been done, the apostles carried the couch, and laid down her precious and holy body in Gethsemane in a new tomb. And, behold, a perfume of sweet savour came forth out of the holy sepulchre of Our Lady the Mother of God; and for three days the voices of invisible angels were heard glorifying Christ Our Lord God, who had been born of her. And when the third day was ended, the voices were no longer heard; and from that time forth all knew that her spotless and precious body had been transferred to paradise.

"And after it had been transferred, behold, we see Elisabeth the mother of S. John the Baptist, and Anne the mother of the Lady, and Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and David, singing the Alleluia, and all the choirs of the saints adoring the holy relics of the Mother of the Lord, and the place full of light, than which light nothing could be more brilliant, and an abundance of perfume in that place to which her precious and holy body had been transferred in paradise, and the melody of those praising Him who had been born of her—sweet melody, of which there is no satiety, such as is given to virgins, and them only to hear. We apostles, therefore, having beheld the sudden precious translation of her holy body, glorified God, who had shown us His wonders at the departure of the Mother of Our Lord Jesus Christ whose prayers [*i.e.* the Mother's], and good offices may we all be deemed worthy to receive, under her shelter, and support, and protection, both in the world that now is, and in that which is to come, glorifying in every time and place her Only-begotten Son, along with the Father and the Holy Spirit, for ever and ever. Amen." *

* *De Dormitione Mariæ.* The latest date assigned to it by Tischendorf is that of the fourth century. Ante-Nicene Christian Library, vol. xvi. p. 513. "And her, whose Assumption is at this day venerated and worshipped throughout the whole world, let us assiduously entreat that she be mindful of us in the presence of her most pious Son, to whom is praise and glory through endless ages of ages. Amen." *The Passing of Mary, Ib.* p. 521.

CHAPTER X.

DEVOTIONAL.

The Blessed Virgin's Place in the Christian Life, and as Our spiritual Mother.

Our Lord Jesus Christ, through the mysteries of His Incarnation and Redemption, holds a relation to us which we may call objective. We believe in Him for what He is revealed to us to be, *viz.*, the Only-begotten Son of God for our sake become Man, and, by the Redemption which He has accomplished, the Saviour of mankind. He is thus the object of faith to our intelligence. This faith of its own nature begets hope in Him for divine mercy, and also love of gratitude to Him in return for what He has thus become, and for all that He has done from love to us. Thus is Jesus Christ the object not only of our intelligence by faith, but also of our hearts' affections, through hope and charity.

But besides this relation, which is in such sense objective, Our Lord bears to us another relation, which may be called subjective, whereby He comes to be, in a manner, the form and subsistence of our spiritual life of grace, and the Life of our Christian life. It is to this the Apostle refers in those places where he speaks of Christ being formed in his disciples, of their growing up into Christ, of their putting on and being clothed with Christ, of their being dead, and buried, and risen with Christ; or when he thus describes his own spiritual state: *I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.**

This relation is grounded on, and results from, the other which we termed objective. That has a nearer affinity to dogmatic or speculative theology, whilst this which we have called a subjective relation, belongs rather to mystical theology, and is more ascetical, practical, and experimental, in the sense that it depends for its maintenance, on the soul's constant

* *Gal.* ii. 19, 20. See *Rom.* vi. 8, 11; *Gal.* iii. 7, iv. 19; *Eph.* iii. 17, iv. 20; *Col.* ii. 12, 20, iii. 1, 3; 1 *Pet.* iii. 15.

co-operation with grace, and habitual exercise of infused virtues. It is necessary for us as Christians to preserve both these relations. For as we can have no true union with God without faith, hope, and charity; so we can have no supernatural life in our souls, unless they are becoming in some measure like to Our Lord Jesus Christ.

Now this process of assimilation to Christ in our spiritual life is intimately connected with that wondrous act of Divine Charity whereby the Eternal Father has adopted us to be His children, and made us brethren of His Only-begotten Son; and caused at the same time the influence of the Spirit of adoption to energise in our hearts. Such is the teaching of the holy Apostles in their Epistles.*

We have said so much on this mystical relation that exists between the Christian soul and Our Lord Jesus Christ, because we have also in our spiritual life an analogous relation with the Blessed Virgin Mary; and because there are many passages in several of the Fathers which bear upon it.

Our Blessed Lady, by reason of her sublime dignity as the ever-Virgin Mother of Our Lord, necessarily claims from all who believe in the Incarnation of the Divine Word and profess to love Him, a recognition of esteem, veneration, and love.

But besides this relation which we have with the Blessed Virgin as the Mother of Our Saviour, we are bound to her in a way that is more subjective. Mary is also *our* spiritual Mother. For since she is the Mother of Jesus Christ, the Head of the mystical Body, she is Mother also of all the members of that Body; and because she is the Mother of Him who is the Only-begotten Son of God by Nature, she is Mother also of all God's children by adoption, to whom He has, moreover, given through grace a certain participation of His own Divine Nature,† and who are thus in very truth the brethren of Jesus Christ her Son.

Hence the same Spirit of adoption, whereby Christians are enabled to cry Abba, Father, also prompts them to call on Christ's Mother as their Mother. And thus our affiliation to the Blessed Virgin flows from Our Lord's own Sonship, both as the Only-begotten of the Father, and also as Son of Mary: and to this He Himself set His seal, when from the Cross, He so emphatically commended His redeemed to His Blessed Mother

* See *Rom.* v. 2, viii. 14-17, 19, 21, 23, 29; 2 *Cor.* vi. 18; *Gal.* iii. 26, iv. 5-7; *Eph.* i. 5, v. 1, 8; 1 *John* iii. 1-3.

† 2 *Pet.* i. 4.

to be thenceforth her children, and her to them to be their Mother, in the person of the beloved disciple.*

Mary, then, as Mother of the faithful has a share in their spiritual life. She on her part is constrained, by the maternal love that she bears to Jesus her Son, to cherish them as her children; whilst they, on their part, are used not only to have recourse to her as children for help in their souls' needs, and to experience her loving succour, but also to behold in her as their Mother, their model for imitation.

Just then as the life of Jesus Christ is the one great theme of ascetic theology, and meditation on His words and works is food and nourishment to the Christian soul; so is it also in measure with the life and examples of the Blessed Virgin. There is, however, this essential difference, that whereas the presence of Jesus Christ in the heart, and assimilation to Him is the end of the spiritual life, the thought of Mary, and imitation of her, are but means to that end. It is in this same sense the Apostle exhorted his disciples to follow him in his imitation of Christ, that thus they might become like to Him.†

Every one knows how large a place the Blessed Virgin has occupied throughout the middle ages and down to the present time in the spiritual asceticism and popular devotion of Catholics; how her divine maternity and virginal purity, the mysteries of her life, her recorded acts and words, her grace and sanctity, her joys and dolours, her tender mercy and love, her powerful intercession, and heavenly glory, have in turn been the themes of so many devout writings. We would, then, show that the devout outpourings of such Saints as Ildephonsus and Anselm, and Bernard, and Bonaventure, and Bernardine of Siena, and Francis of Sales, and Alphonsus Liguori, together with what they wrote of Mary in relation to the spiritual life, find their expression in the writings of Fathers of earlier times, such as Origen and Methodius, and the three Gregorys of the East, and Ephrem and Ambrose and Augustine and Jerome, and Basil of Seleucia and Gregory the Great.‡

The foregoing remarks may serve to explain the signification we attach to certain passages of the Fathers which we now

* *John* xix. 26, 27.

† 1 *Cor.* iv. 16, xi. 1; *Philip.* iii. 17; 1 *Thess.* i. 6; 2 *Thess.* iii. 7; *Heb.* xiii. 7.

‡ Many passages given in other Chapters will serve to illustrate this, especially those which appear in Chapter V. on Mary's practice of virtue. See also Index. *Devotional, Mary our Mother.*

append; and why we here group together those that lend especially to meditation and devotion, such as Mary's soliloquies to the Infant Jesus, and her dolorous plaints of compassion at the foot of the Cross, together with devout hymns and poems from various ancient sources, which we give in the following Chapters.

We quote the following from Auguste Nicolas as bearing on our present subject:—

"In the writings of S. Athanasius, the Blessed Virgin constantly appears in her character of Mother of God, as the shuttle, so to speak, which serves to weave the texture of the Faith, to interlace and knit the Divinity to the Humanity in Jesus Christ, and through Jesus Christ to unite heaven and earth. The holy doctor applies himself specially to show that by denying Jesus Christ to be as consubstantial with His heavenly Father as He was consubstantial with His earthly Mother, all this texture of the Christian plan was broken; and that thus it was by Mary, and in Mary, knit together. We shall cite but one short passage that sums up all this beautiful theology, and justifies the liturgical relation which the Church always maintains between the *Pater* and *Ave*, between the most exalted Christian truths and humble devotion to Mary.

"'The Son of God,' says this great doctor, 'became Son of Man, in order that the son of man, that is, of Adam, might become son of God. For the Word who was begotten from above in a manner ineffable, inexplicable, incomprehensible, and eternally, from the Father, the same in time was begotten in a lower way of Mary, the Virgin Mother of God, that those who had been before begotten in a lower way, might be begotten anew from on high, that is, of God. He therefore has as really a Mother on earth, as we have a Father in heaven. It is for this reason He calls Himself Son of Man, that men might call God their Father in heaven. *Our Father*, He says, *Who art in heaven.*' *

"Thus we owe it to Mary, inasmuch as she consented to be Mother of God, that we have the spirit of adoption of sons, whereby we can call God our Father; and this explains why the Church in her Liturgy unites with the *Pater noster*, the *Ave Maria;* and again how devotion to Mary is so intimately connected with orthodox faith."

Hence says S. Gregory Nazianzen:—

"If any one does not profess holy Mary Mother of God, he is outside the Divinity. If any one does not confess that Christ was formed in the womb

* *De Incarnat. contr. Arianos.* Opp. T. 2, p. 700, Migne.

of Mary in a manner divine, and at the same time human, he is equally an unbeliever (atheist)." *

S. EPHREM.

"Thou art not so the Son of Man that I should sing (lull) unto Thee in a common way; for Thy Conception is new, and Thy Birth marvellous. Without the Spirit who shall sing to Thee? A new muttering of prophecy is hot within me. How shall I call Thee a stranger to us, who art from us? Shall I call Thee Son? Should I call Thee Brother? Husband, should I call Thee? Lord should I call Thee, O Child that didst give Thy Mother a second birth from the waters? For I am Thy sister, of the house of David the father of us Both. Again, I am Thy Mother because of Thy Conception, and Thy Bride am I because of Thy sanctification, Thy handmaid and Thy daughter from the Blood and Water wherewith Thou hast purchased me and baptised me. The Son of the Most High came and dwelt in me, and I became His Mother, and as by a second birth † I brought Him forth, so did He bring me forth by the regeneration; because He put His Mother's garment on, she clothed her body with His glory. . . . My pearl (of virginity) is not lost; in Thy treasury it is stored, because Thou hast put it on. . . . As for Joseph's bride, not even his breath exhaled from her garments, since she conceived Cinnamon. A wall of fire was Thy Conception unto me, O Holy Son. The little flower was faint, because the smell of the Lily of Glory was great. The treasure-house of spices stood in no need of flowers or its smells; flesh stood aloof because it saw in the Belly a Conception from the Spirit.

"The woman ministered before the man, because he is her head. Joseph rose to minister before His Lord, who was in Mary. The priest ‡ ministered before Thy Ark by reason of Thy holiness. Moses carried the tables of stone which the Lord wrote, and Joseph bare about the pure Tablet in whom the Son of the Creator was dwelling. The tables had ceased, because the world was filled with Thy doctrine." §

"The Holy One dwelt bodily in the womb; and He dwelt spiritually in the mind. . . . Because Mary perceived Him, she left her betrothed; He dwelleth in chaste virgins if they perceive Him. . . . Glory to that Voice which became Body, and to the Word of the High One that became Flesh. Hear Him also, O ears, and see Him, O eyes, and feel Him, O hands, and eat Him, O mouth. Ye members and senses give praise unto Him that came and quickened the whole body. Mary bare the silent Babe, while in Him were hidden all tongues. Joseph bare Him, and in Him was hidden a nature more ancient than aught that is old. The High One became as a little child, and in Him was hidden a treasure of wisdom sufficing for all. Though Most High, yet He sucked the milk of Mary, and of His goodness all creatures suck. He is the Breast of Life, and the Breath of Life; the dead suck from His life, and

* *Letters to Cledonius against Apollinaris.* Auguste Nicolas, *La Vierge Marie*, Tom. ii. Liv. iii. Ch. v. n. 3.

† "The second Birth is His birth of Mary in time, the first, the Eternal Generation of the Father. Perhaps, in what follows, we should read the Syriac, 'because His Body had put on His Mother's garment,' *i.e.*, because His flesh He had taken from His Mother."

‡ S. Ephrem possibly here looks on S. Joseph as a type of the priesthood. See S. Ambrose, *In Luc.* L. ii. n. 7, quoted above, p. 271.

§ *Serm.* xi., *In Natali Domini*, Opp. Syr. Tom. ii. p. 429. Morris, pp. 51, 52.

revive. When He sucked the milk of Mary, He was suckling all with life. While He was lying on His Mother's bosom, in His bosom were all creatures lying. . . . While His body was forming within the womb, His power was fashioning all members. While the Conception of the Son was going on in the womb, He Himself was fashioning babes in the womb. . . . His power compassed her that compassed Him. . . . It was by power from Him that Mary was able to bear in her bosom Him that beareth up all things. It was from the great storehouse of all creatures, Mary gave Him all that she did give Him. She gave Him milk from Himself that prepared it, she gave Him food from Himself that made it. He gave milk unto Mary as God: again He sucked it from her, as the Son of Man. Her hands bare Him, in that He had emptied His strength; and her arm embraced Him, in that He had made Himself small. The measure of His Majesty who hath measured? He caused His measures to shrink into a raiment. She wove for Him and clothed Him, because He had put off His glory. She measured Him and wove for Him, since He had made Himself little.

"The sea when it bore Him was still and calmed, and how came the lap of Joseph to bear Him? The womb of hell conceived Him and was burst open, and how did the womb of Mary contain Him? The stone that was over the grave He broke open by His might, and how could Mary's arm contain Him? Thou camest to a low estate, that Thou mightest raise all to life. Glory be unto Thee from all that are quickened by Thee. Who is able to speak of the Son of the Hidden One, that came down and clothed Himself with a Body in the womb? He came forth and sucked milk as a child, and among little children the Son of the Lord of all crept about. They saw Him as a little Child in the street, while there was dwelling in Him the Love of all. Visibly children surrounded Him in the street: in secret angels surrounded Him in fear. Cheerful was He with the little ones as a Child: awful was He with the angels as a Commander. He was awful to John for him to loose the shoe's latchet: He was gentle to sinners that kissed His feet. The angels as angels saw Him: according to the measure of his knowledge each man beheld Him: according to the measure of each man's discernment, thus he perceives Him that is greater than all. The Father and Himself alone are a full measure of knowledge so as to know Him as He is. For every creature whether above or below obtaineth each his measure of knowledge; He the Lord of all giveth all to us." *

"Joseph caressed the Son as a Babe, he ministered to Him as God. He rejoiced in Him as the Just One, greatly bewildered. 'Who hath given me the Son of the Most High to be as a Son to me? I was jealous of Thy Mother, and I thought to put her away, and I knew not that in her womb was hidden a mighty treasure, that should suddenly enrich my poor estate. David the king sprung of my race, and wore the crown: and I have come to a very low estate, who instead of a king am a carpenter. Yet a crown hath come to me, for in my bosom is the Lord of crowns.'

"With rival words did Mary wax hot, yea she lulled Him saying: 'Who hath given me, the barren, that I should conceive and bring forth this One, that is manifold, a little one that is great; for that He is wholly with me, and wholly everywhere? The day that Gabriel came in unto my low estate,

* *Serm.* iii., *In Natali Domini*, Morris, pp. 21-25.

He made me free instead of a handmaid,* of a sudden: for I was the handmaid of Thy Divine Nature, and am also the Mother of Thy human nature, O Lord and Son. Of a sudden the handmaid became the King's daughter in Thee, Thou Son of the King. Lo, the meanest in the house of David, by reason of Thee, Thou Son of David, lo, a daughter of earth hath attained unto heaven by the Heavenly One. How am I astonied that there is cast before me a Child, older than all things. His eye is gazing unceasingly upon heaven. As for the stammering of His mouth, to my seeming it betokens that with God its silence speaks. Who ever saw a Child the whole of whom beholdeth every place? His look is like one that is ordering all creatures that are above and that are below. His visage is like that Commander that commandeth all. How shall I open the fountain of milk to Thee, O Fountain? Or how shall I give nourishment to Thee that nourishest all from Thy Table? How shall I bring to swaddling clothes One wrapped round with glory-rays? My mouth knoweth not how I shall call Thee, O Thou Child of the Living One: for to venture to call Thee as the Child of Joseph, I tremble, since Thou art not his seed; and I am fearful of denying the name of him to whom they have betrothed me. Whiles Thou art the Son of One, then should I be calling Thee the Son of many. For ten thousand names would not suffice Thee, since Thou art the Son of God and also the Son of man, yea David's Son, and Mary's Lord. Who hath made the Lord of mouths to be without a mouth? For my pure conception of Thee wicked men have slandered me. Be, O Thou Holy One, a speaker for Thy Mother. Show a miracle that they may be persuaded from Whom it is that I conceived Thee. For Thy sake too I am hated, Thou Lover of all. Lo, I am persecuted who have conceived and brought forth one House of refuge for men; Adam will rejoice, for Thou art the Key of paradise. Lo, the sea raged against Thy Mother as against Jona. Lo, Herod, that raging wave, sought to drown the Lord of the seas. Whither I shall flee, Thou shalt teach me, O Lord of Thy Mother. With Thee I will flee, that I may gain in Thee life in every place. The prison with Thee is no prison, for in Thee man goeth up to heaven: the grave with Thee is no grave, for Thou art the Resurrection. . . .'

"The Magi came with their treasures, the barren came with their provisions. Provisions and riches were suddenly accumulated in the house of the poor. The barren woman cried out, as if at a haven, Who hath granted me this sight of Thy Babe, O Blessed One, by whom the heaven and earth are filled? Blessed be thy Fruit, which made the barren vine to bear a cluster. . . . John approached with his parents and worshipped the Son, and He shed glory upon his countenance; and he was not moved as when in the womb. Mighty miracle that here he was worshipping, there he leaped."†

"At the birth of the Son there was a great shouting in Bethlehem: for the Angels came down, and gave praise there. Their voices were a great thunder: at that voice of praise the silent ones came and gave praise to the Son. Blessed be that Babe in whom Eve and Adam were restored to youth. The shepherds also came laden with the best gifts of their flock; sweet milk, clean flesh, befitting praise. They put a difference, and gave Joseph the flesh,

* "The free-woman, my Son, is Thy handmaid." *In Nat. Dom.* xii. Morris, p. 54.

† *Serm.* iv., *Ib.* p. 425, Morris, p. 28.

Mary the milk, and the Son the praise. They brought and presented a suckling lamb to the Paschal Lamb, a first-born to the First-born, a sacrifice to the Sacrifice, a lamb of time to the Lamb of Truth. Fair sight to see the lamb offered to the Lamb. The lamb bleated as it was offered before the First-born. . . . At that voice of praise brides were moved to hallow themselves, and virgins to be chaste, and even girls became staid; they advanced and came in multitudes, and worshipped the Son. Aged women of the city of David came to the daughter of David, they gave thanks and said, 'Blessed be our country whose streets are lightened with the rays of Jesse.' To-day is the throne of David established by Thee, O Son of David. . . .

"Blessed be the Babe whose Mother was Bride of the Holy One! . . . Blessed be Mary in whose womb, though she asked not, Thou didst dwell holily, O Gift that poured itself upon them that received it. Anna with bitter tears asked a child, Sara and Rebecca with vows and words, Elisabeth also with her prayer: after having harassed themselves for a long time yet so obtained comfort. Blessed be Mary, who without vows and without prayers in her virginity conceived and brought forth the Lord of all the sons of her companions, who have been or shall be chaste and righteous, priests and kings. Who else lulled a son in her bosom as Mary did? Who ever dared to call her son, Son of the Maker, Son of the Creator, Son of the Most High? Who ever dared to speak to her son as in prayer? O Trust of Thy Mother as God, her Beloved and her Son as Man, in fear and love it is meet for Thy Mother to stand before Thee." *

"To Thy Mother, Lord, no man knew what name to give. Should he call her Virgin, her Child stood there, and married no man knew her to be. If then none comprehended Thy Mother, who shall suffice for Thee? For she was alone Thy Mother, along with all, Thy Sister. She was Thy Mother, she was Thy Sister. She along with chaste women was Thy betrothed. With everything didst Thou adorn her, Thou ornament of Thy Mother. For she was Thy Bride by nature † ere Thou hadst come; she conceived Thee not by nature after Thou wast come, O Holy One, and was a Virgin when she had brought Thee forth holily. Mary gained in Thee, O Lord, the honours of all married women. She conceived Thee within her without marriage. There was milk in her teats not after the ordinary way. Thou madest the thirsty land suddenly a fountain of milk. If she carried Thee, Thy mighty look made her burden light; if she gave Thee to eat, it was because Thou wert hungry; if she gave Thee to drink, it was because Thou wert thirsty; willingly, if she embraced Thee, Thou, the coal of mercies, didst keep her bosom safe. A wonder is Thy Mother. The Lord entered her, and became a servant: the Lord entered her, and became silent within her: thunder entered her, and His voice was still: the Shepherd of all entered her, He became a Lamb in her, and came forth bleating. The Belly of Thy Mother changed the order of things, O Thou that arrangest all. The Rich went in, He came out poor: the High One went in, He came out lowly. Brightness

* *Serm.* v. et vi. *In Nat. Dom.* xii. Morris, pp. 32-36.

† "That is, by the established course of things (as the root of the original word would suggest): holy women once made holy, though by grace, are naturally brides of Christ: only she was 'adorned with everything' above all other women, inasmuch as she was the holiest of holy women. The expression φύσει ὑιοὶ was applied of old to Christians." Morris.

went into her and clothed Himself, and came forth a despised form. The Mighty went in, and clad Himself with fear from the Belly. He that giveth food to all went in, and gat hunger. He that giveth all to drink went in, and gat thirst. Naked and bare came forth from her the Clother of all. . . . Eve lifted up her eyes from hell and rejoiced in that day, because the Son of her daughter as a medicine of life came down to raise up the mother of His Mother. Blessed Babe, that bruised the head of the Serpent that smote her. . . .

"How meek art Thou! How mighty art Thou, O Child! Thy judgment is mighty, Thy love is sweet. Who can stand against Thee? Thy Father is in heaven, Thy Mother is on earth: who shall declare Thee? If a man seek after Thy Nature, it is hidden in heaven in the Mighty Bosom of the Godhead; and if a man seek after Thy visible Body, it is laid down before their eyes in the little bosom of Mary. The mind wandereth between Thy generations, O Thou Rich One! Thick folds are upon Thy Godhead. Who can sound Thy depths, Thou great Sea that made itself little? We come to see Thee as God, and lo, Thou art a Man, and there shineth forth the Light of Thy Godhead.

"Who would believe that Thou art the heir of David's throne? A manger hast Thou inherited out of all his beds, a cave has come down to Thee out of all his palaces. Instead of his chariots a common ass's colt perchance cometh down to Thee. How fearless art Thou, O Babe, that dost let all have Thee to carry: upon every one that meeteth with Thee dost Thou smile: to every one that sees Thee art Thou gladsome. Thy love is as one that hungereth after men. Thou makest no distinction between Thy fathers and strangers, nor Thy Mother and maidservants, nor her that suckled Thee and the unclean. Was it Thy forwardness or Thy love, O Thou that lovest all? What stirred Thee that Thou didst let all that saw Thee have Thee, both rich and poor? Thou assistedst them that called Thee not. Whence came it that Thou hungeredst so after men? How great was Thy love, that if one rebuked Thee Thou wert not wroth. . . ." *

"Come rest and be still in the bosom of Thy Mother, Son of the Glorious. Forwardness fitteth not the sons of kings. O Son of David, Thou art glorious, and yet the Son of Mary, who dost hide Thy beauty in the inner chamber. To whom art Thou like, glad Babe, fair Little One, whose Mother is a Virgin, whose Father is hidden, whom even the Seraphim are not able to look upon? Tell us to whom Thou art like, O Son of the Gracious. When the wrathful came to see Thee Thou madest them gladsome: they exchanged smiles one with another: the angry were made gentle in Thee, O Sweet One. Blessed art Thou, Little One, for that in Thee even the bitter are made sweet. Who ever saw a babe that was gladsome, when in arms, to those that were near him, and, lo! reached himself unto them that were far off? Fair sight to see a Child that is thoughtful for every man that they may see Him. He that hath care came and saw Thee, and his care fled away. He that had anxiety, at Thee forgat his anxiety; the hungry by Thee forgat his victuals; and he that had an errand, by Thee was errant and forgat his journey. Ah, still Thyself, and let men go to their works. Thou art a Son of the poor, learn from Thyself that all the poor had to leave their work to come. Thou who lovest men, hast bound men together by Thy gladsomeness." †

* *Serm.* viii. *In Nat. Dom.* xii. Morris, p. 41.

† *Serm.* ix. *Ib.* Morris, p. 45.

"In Thee will I begin to speak, Thou Head that didst begin all created things. I, even I, will open my mouth, but it is Thou that fillest my mouth. I am the earth to Thee, and Thou art the husbandman. Sow Thy voice in me, Thou that sowedst Thyself in the belly of Thy Mother. 'All the chaste daughters of the Hebrews, and the virgin daughters of the chief men, are astonished at me.* For Thee doth the daughter of the poor meet with envy, for Thee the daughter of the weak with jealousy. Who hath given Thee to me, O Son of the Rich One, that hated the bosom of the rich women? Who led Thee to the poor? For Joseph was needy, and I also in want, yet Thy merchants have come, and brought gold to the house of the poor.' She saw the Magi: her songs increased at their offerings. Lo, Thy worshippers have surrounded me, yea Thy offerings have enriched me. Blessed be the Babe who made His Mother a harp for His words: and as the harp waiteth for its master, my mouth waiteth for Thee. May the tongue of Thy Mother bring what pleaseth Thee; and since I have learnt a new Conception by Thee, let my mouth learn in Thee, O new Son, a new song of praise. And if hindrances are no hindrances to Thee—since difficulties are easy to Thee, as a womb without marriage conceived Thee, and a belly without seed brought Thee forth—it is easy for a little mouth to multiply Thy great glory. Lo, I am oppressed and despised, and yet cheerful: mine ears are filled with reproof and scorn, and it is a small thing to me to bear, for ten thousand troubles can a single comfort of Thine chase away, and since I am not despised by Thee, O Son, my countenance is bright: and I am slandered for having conceived, and yet have brought forth the Truth who justifieth me. For if Thamar was justified by Juda, how much more shall I be justified by Thee.

"David Thy father sang in a psalm of Thee before Thou hadst come, that to Thee should be given the gold of Saba. This psalm that he sung of Thee, lo, it, whilst Thou art yet a Child, in reality heapeth before Thee myrrh and gold; and the hundred and fifty psalms that he wrote, in Thee were seasoned, because all the sayings of prophecy stood in need of Thy sweetness, for without Thy salt all manner of wisdom were tasteless." †

"The Babe that I carry carrieth me, saith Mary, and He hath lowered His wings, and taken and placed me between His pinions, and mounted into the air, and a promise has been given me that height and depth shall be my Son's. I have seen Gabriel that called Him Lord, and the high priest the aged servant, that carried Him and bare Him. I have seen the Magi when they bowed down, and Herod when he was troubled because the King had come. Satan also who strangled the little ones that Moses might perish, murdered the little ones that the Living One might die. To Egypt He fled, who came to Judæa, that He might labour and wander there: he sought to catch the Man that would catch himself. In her virginity Eve put on the leaves of shame. Thy Mother put on in her virginity the garment of glory that sufficeth for all. She gave the little vest of the body to Him that covereth all. Blessed is she in whose heart and mind Thou wast. A King's palace was she by Thee, O Son of the King, and a Holy of Holies by Thee, O High Priest. She had not the trouble nor vexation of a family, or a husband. Eve, again,

* S. Ephrem, without notice introduces the Blessed Virgin Mary as speaking. Such a change of persons is frequent in these Rhythms.

† *Serm.* x. *In Nat. Dom.* xii. Morris, p. 48.

was a nest and a cave for the accursed Serpent, that entered in and dwelt in her. His evil counsel became bread to her that she might become dust. Thou art our Bread, and Thou art also of our race, and our garment of glory. . . ." *

"Let the whole air praise Him with us, in whose wide space it is that all things are made glorious, which saw its Mighty Lord that had become a Little Child in a little bosom. Blessed be His dignity.

"Let the fields give praise, that suckle their fruits from His fountains. They worshipped because they saw the Son in arms, and the Pure One sucking pure milk. Blessed be His good pleasure.

"Let the earth glorify the might of her Creator, who laid seed in her from the beginning, that she might bring forth all her produce; for it saw Mary a thirsty land, who yielded the fruit of a Child that was a wonder, yea a marvel. Then it praised Him more exceedingly, for that He was a great Sea of all good things. To Him be exaltation." †

"Whereunto art thou like? Let thy stillness speak to one that heareth thee: with silent mouth speak with us: for whoso heareth the stammerings of thy silence, to him the type uttereth its silent cry concerning our Redeemer.

"Thy Mother is a Virgin of the Sea; ‡ though he took her not to wife, she fell into his bosom, though he knew her not; she conceived thee near him, though he did not know her. Thou art the only progeny of all forms which art like to the Word on High, whom singly the Most High begot.§ The engraven forms || seem to be the type of created things above. This visible offspring of the invisible womb is a type of great things. Thy fair conception was without seed, and, without marriage intercourse was thy pure generation, and without brethren was thy single birth. Our Lord had brethren, and yet not brethren, since He was an Only-begotten. O solitary one, thou type exact of the Only-begotten! There is a type of thine in the crown of kings, wherein thou hast brothers and sisters. Goodly gems are thy brethren, with beryls and unios as thy companions: may gold be as it were thy kinsman: may there be unto the King of kings a crown from thy well-beloved ones. When thou camest up from the sea, that living tomb, thou didst cry out, Let me have a goodly assemblage of brethren, relatives, and kinsmen. As the wheat is in the stem, so thou art in the crown with princes: and it is a just restoration to thee, as if of a pledge, that from that depth thou shouldest be exalted to a goodly eminence. Wheat doth the stem bear in the field: thee doth the head of the King upon his chariot carry about. O daughter of the water, who hast left the sea wherein thou wert born, and art gone up to the dry land wherein thou art beloved: for men have loved, and seized, and adorned themselves with thee, like as they did that Offspring whom the Gentiles loved and crowned themselves withal. . . . Shadowed forth in thy beauty is the beauty of the Son, who clothed Himself with suffering when the nails passed through

* *Serm.* xii. *In Nat. Dom.* xii. Morris, p. 52.

† *Ib. Serm.* xiii., p. 75.

‡ In the *Pearl* type and anti-type are so intermixed as to create to our minds some confusion in the word, *e.g.*, "Virgin of the sea, whom the sea took not to wife." Allusion is here made to a title of Mary akin to Stella Maris.

§ The Gnostics represented the Holy Ghost as the Mother of God the Son. At this heresy S. Ephrem is probably here glancing.

|| Pearls, he means, have their beauty by nature, and so are like Christ: other stones must be graven, and so are like created natures. See *Rhythm* iv. 4.

Him. The awl passed in thee since they handled thee roughly, as they did His hands: and because He suffered He reigned, as by thy sufferings thy beauty increased. And if they showed no pity upon thee, neither did love thee; still suffer as thou mightest, thou hast come to reign. Simon Peter (Syr. Cephas, rock) showed pity on the Rock: whoso hath smitten it, is himself thereby overcome; it is by reason of Its suffering that Its beauty hath adorned things above and things below." *

"Who hath ever taken hold of the Spirit in his fists? † Come and see, O Solomon, what the Lord of thy father hath done. For Fire and Spirit against its nature He hath mingled, and hath poured them into the fists of His disciples. Solomon asked again, 'Who hath bound the waters in a garment?' ‡ Lo! the Fountain in a garment, *the lap of Mary!* From the Cup of Life the distilling of life in the midst of the garment do Thine handmaids take.

"Oh, Might hidden in the veil of the Sanctuary, that Might which the mind never conceives, It hath His love brought down; and It hath descended and brooded over § the veil of the Altar of propitiation. Lo, Fire and Spirit in the bosom of her that bare Thee! Lo, Fire and Spirit in that river wherein Thou were baptised! Fire and Spirit in our baptism! In the Bread and the Cup is Fire and the Holy Ghost. Thy Bread killeth the greedy one who had made us his bread; || Thy Cup destroyeth death which swallowed us up. We have eaten Thee, O Lord, yea we have drunken Thee, not that we shall make Thee fail, but that we might have life in Thee.

"The latchet of Thy shoe was a thing fearful to the discerning; the hem of Thy garment was fearful to the understanding: ¶ our generation is foolish in scrutinising Thee. Oh, Feast which is drunken with New Wine! Wonder is there in Thy footsteps that went upon the waters; the great sea didst Thou make obedient beneath Thy feet; ** to a little stream Thy head made itself obedient, in that it condescended to be baptised therein. †† The stream was like John ‡‡ who baptised therein. Both of them in littleness mutually shadow out each other. To the little stream and the weak servant the Lord of them made Himself obedient.

"See my folds be filled, Lord, with the dropping of Thy blessings; and as no room is now remaining, as in my borders I am full, O stay Thy Gift, and, as a store, O keep It in Thy treasury for Thee to give It us again!" §§

"In the Belly He was for nine months silent. Thirty years also He was in the earth that by His long stay we might gain Him by use. He left those above, and became a companion unto those below: He left those that were found, and sought for those that were lost. He left those that were wise, He chose those that were simple. . . . Thou art the Son of the Living One, and Thou art the Son of a mortal. Thou art the Son of our Creator, O Lord, Who in Thee stablished all things, and also the Son of Joseph, that workman who learnt by Thee. By Thee it was that the Maker without teaching stablished

* *The Pearl*, Rhythm ii., Morris, p. 89.
† *Prov.* xxx. 4.
‡ *Ib.*
§ *Luke* i. 35.
|| See S. August. on *Ps.* lxxiii. 14—Conf. 1 *Cor.* x. 21, *Rom.* viii. 10, 11, 13.
¶ *Matt.* ix. 20.
** *Ps.* lxxvi. 20; *Matt.* xiv. 26.
†† *Matt.* iii. 13; 4 *Kings* v. 12.
‡‡ *John* iii. 30.
§§ *Rhythms upon the Faith, against the Disputers*, xi. Opp. Syr. T. iii. Morris, p. 145.

all things. With Thy Finger the Creator fashioned all the creatures. By Thee it was that Joseph fashioned his carpenter's work, since he saw that Thou wert his Teacher. Hail, Son of the Creator! Hail, to the Son of the carpenter, who, when creating, created everything in the mystery of the Cross. And haply even in the house of Joseph, that carpenter, with the Cross He was busied all the day." *

"With the weapons of the guilty wrestler did the Lord prevail. He clad on a body which was from Adam, and from David, that with that body which the wicked one had made guilty, he might be brought low, so that his disgrace might the more abound. Yea, that littleness of Thine is too great for the eloquent. For who shall open his mouth to speak of Him that feedeth all, who was yet brought up at the poor table of Joseph and Mary? Coming from the Bosom great and rich, which maketh all things rich, in the poor bosom of Mary wert Thou brought up. Thou hadst a mortal father upon earth, the while Thou wert living and quickening all things." †

"I could wish, O God most wise, that, if it may be, Thou wouldst make known to me, by what appointment, or for what cause, Thou didst come forth from a virginal womb. Assuredly, if I mistake not, the formation of Adam prefigured Thy nativity. Since he was formed of virgin earth as yet unbroken by the plough. Thou, in like manner, didst will to come forth from the inviolate womb of a daughter of David, the spouse of Joseph without human co-operation.

"In the sacred history of the genealogy of the kings are set down the names of men alone without any mention being made of women, since it would be no way fitting that their names should be given. Wherefore it was not becoming that the Child should be inscribed under the Mother's name.

"Joseph, son of David, espoused to himself a daughter of David's family, from whom he had offspring without generation on his part, this offspring was Mary's own too, though she herself never knew man. And so from these two [virginal spouses] their family was enriched with most august progeny, which is fitly called 'Son of David' in the afore-mentioned genealogy of kings.

"Most unseemly indeed had it been, for Christ to be generated from seed of man, and ignominous for Him to be born of woman out of wedlock. Mary gave birth to her Babe, registered not under her own name, but that of Joseph, though not sprung from his seed. Without Joseph then sprung Joseph's Son, who was at once Son and Father of David.

"When Joseph held converse about a mystery so sublime, he called his virgin spouse by the name of wife, and—ever living with her in inviolate chastity—he called himself her husband, lest, perchance, any should suspect that the family of David had become extinct. For without a human father, how was it conceivable that Christ should be accounted the Son of David? Hence it behoved that the spouse of the Virgin should have the repute of husband. In like manner the Lord Himself acknowledged His descent from David, when He refused not to be called his son.

* *Adv. Scrutatores Rhythm.* xvii., Morris, p. 163. "When Jesus came to the Jordan, He was held to be the son of Joseph the carpenter, appearing without beauty, as the Scripture had set forth, and looked upon as a carpenter. For whilst He was amongst men He wrought works of carpentry, ploughs and yokes, by them teaching the symbols of righteousness, and a laborious life." S. Justin M., *Dial. cum Tryph.* c. 88.

† *Ib.* xxiv. p. 182.

"If then Christ is called the Son of a man, *viz.*, David, so far removed from His own birth, because He was well pleased with him; who will dare to call in question the birth of Jesus Christ according to the flesh, when Christ was conceived of a daughter of David, was nurtured in the bosom of David's son, and was adored in David's city?

"As in silence I meditate on all these things, I am seized with the desire to know what the Virgin was doing and how occupied, when Gabriel, God's herald, came to her. It is most probable that he found her in prayer, as he found several times Daniel in prayer. Gracious messages are wont to follow prayer. Between the two there is a very close connection and union, so that they mutually renew and inflame one another. . . . All good things find their repose in prayer, as in a most secure haven: since prayer is the basis and foundation of them all. Hence in Mary's prayer the Annunciation of the Angel discovers the cause of all joys; and therefore Gabriel having saluted her with the Ave, says, *Fear not.* But we should remark that the Archangel was sent under the form of a venerable aged man, lest so chaste and so modest a maiden should be troubled, or seized with any fear, at a youthful appearance. We read of Gabriel being sent on embassy to two most exemplary old men, and to a Virgin, between whom there was a close connection, and much resemblance in points of character and circumstance—to wit, the Virgin, the sterile Zachary, and the faithful Daniel. This last conceived beforehand in prophetic spirit the Lord who should soon be born. Zachary begat the voice of one crying in the desert; whilst Mary brought forth to light the Word of the Most High God.

"No one can worthily praise Joseph, whom Thou, O true and natural Son of the Eternal Father, didst not refuse to have for Thine adopted father, Joseph, that just and prudent spouse . . . whom, when in doubt, perplexed, and harassed, the angel, appearing to him in sleep, confirmed: he it was who brought Thee back from Egypt. Worthy therefore is he that Thou shouldst increase his dignity, and that the more, because his own extreme integrity bore a glorious testimony to Thine own innocence and sanctity." *

"The pure and immaculate Virgin, as she stands by the Cross and beholds the Saviour hanging thereon, contemplating His most dread wounds, and having before her mind the nails, the laments, the blows and scourges, with great wailing and sorrowful plaints, cried out saying: O my sweetest Son, my dearest Son, how dost Thou endure that Cross? My Son and my God, how is it that Thou dost suffer spittings, the nails and lance? Why dost Thou bear blows, mockings, insults, and contumelies? Why dost Thou endure the crown of thorns, the purple robe, the sponge, the reed, the vinegar, and gall? Wherefore hangest Thou on the Cross dead and naked, my Son, Thou 'who coverest the heaven with clouds'? † How dost Thou suffer thirst, Thou who art the Creator of all things, and hast made the seas and all the waters? Why, being innocent, dost Thou die in the midst of the wicked and impious? . . . My heart fails me, as I behold Thee fastened to the Cross, nailed thereto, and covered with wounds, my most beloved Son. . . .

"O Gabriel, Archangel and Minister of God, O Archangel Gabriel, come now and defend my cause. Where is now that Ave, O Angel? Where that blessed Ave, which thou spakest to me, O herald? Where now that joy and

* *De Divers. Serm.* i. Opp. Syr. Tom. iii. p. 600. † *Ps.* cxlvi. 8.

benediction, wherewith thou didst say to me: *Blessed art thou amongst women?* But why didst thou not make known to me the dolour and sacrifice, which in the name of my most beloved Son, were to be mine, when thou revealedst to me that great joy which I had in the beginning? I have been in continual tribulations and wailings, and have had to suffer all along the excessive ill-will of the Jews, and the ingratitude of personal wrong-doers and transgressors. O admirable Simeon! Lo, now the sword wherewith thou didst predict my heart should be pierced through. See here the sword, see here the wound, my Son and my God. Thy death hath come in even to my heart: my bowels are rent asunder: my light is darkened, and the cruel sword hath pierced through my breast. I behold Thy tremendous Passion, my Son and my God. I look on Thy undeserved death, and I am not able to succour.

"Where now is Thy beauty and comeliness, my Son? Take pity on Thy Mother, now desolate and bereaved, O my Son. Pity poor Mary, left behind all alone, O my sweetest One. Have pity, O most dutiful Son, and console me. My Son, regard my tears, hearken to my sighs and groans, and open Thy mouth. Give me consolation, my Son: for I have not where at all even to lay my head. I have none, neither father nor mother, brother nor sister, now to console me. Thou art my Father, Thou my Brother, Thou my Son: Thou to me art life, and breath, hope and protection: Thou my consolation and being, Thou my Lord and my God, Thou my Creator and Sustainer.

"Come weep and mourn with me all ye women, disciples of the Lord, as you behold my dolours, and the exceeding deep wounds of my heart. Come thou most holy Cross and blessed Wood. Bend down to me, that I may kiss the wounds of my dearest Son and my God, and may salute my own Child, that I may embrace my Son's body, and kiss His most sweet mouth, His eyes and face, His hands and feet, and His most precious Blood so cruelly and unjustly shed (literally, and the most iniquitous carnage: et cædem iniquissimam). Bend down, venerable Cross, bend down. O Cross, peerless is thy glory, great thy grace, immense thy virtue and power. O holy and blessed Wood, whereon thy God and innocent Creator, as a thief and guilty one, lies stretched.

"O my Son, my most sweet and dearest Son, I honour these Thy afflictions. I worship and adore Thy mercy and magnanimity. I venerate the lance, the wounds, the reed, the nails, the sponge, the blows, the mockings, and reproaches, the gall and vinegar, the spittings, the buffetings and stripes, my most sweet Son. And since Thou hast deigned to endure all these for the sake of Thy creature, Thy ignominy, my Son, hath become for all men their glory, and Thy death, for the whole world is turned to life. But rise Thou again in very deed as soon as possible, my Son and God, even as Thou didst Thyself foretell to me, that the whole world may be saved. Thou hast trodden down and trampled over death and destruction by Thy Death, that so greater joy might shine forth to me Thy humble Mother, and that all Thy beloved may be glad with me.

"But now, in turn, we unite to praise thee, O pure and immaculate one, the self-same Blessed Virgin, and faultless Mother of thy great Son and the God of all. O perfectly spotless and entirely sacrosanct, the hope of despairing sinners. We bless thee as most full of grace, who didst give birth to Christ, God and Man. We all fall down before thee. We all invoke thee and implore thy help. Deliver us, O Virgin, holy and undefiled, from every

pressing strait, and from all temptations of the devil. Be our peacemaker and advocate in the hour of death and judgment; save us from the future unquenchable fire and the exterior darkness; and render us worthy of the glory of thy Son, O Virgin and Mother most sweet and clement. For thou art our sole hope—most secure, and most holy—as Christians, with God: to Whom be glory and honour, praise and dominion world without end. Amen."*

We give the four next following passages together, because they bear upon Mary in relation to the Blessed Eucharist.†

"Mary hid in us to-day leaven come from Abraham." ‡

"From the dry land gushed the Fountain which sufficed to satisfy the thirst of the Gentiles. From the Virgin's womb, as from a strong rock, sprouted up the seed whence was much fruit. . . . One true Sheaf gave Bread, the Bread of heaven, whereof there is no stint. The bread which the first-born brake in the wilderness failed and passed away, though very good. He returned again and broke the New Bread which ages and generations shall not waste away. The seven loaves also that He broke failed, and the five loaves too that He multiplied were consumed. The Bread that He brake exceeded the world's needs, for the more it was divided, the more it multiplied exceedingly. With much wine also He filled the waterpots. They drew it out, yet it failed though it was abundant. Though of the Chalice that He gave the draught was small, very great was its strength so that there is no stint thereto. A Chalice is He that containeth all strong wines, and also a Mystery in the midst of which He Himself is. The One Bread that He brake hath no bound, and the One Chalice that He mingled hath no stint. The Wheat that was sown on the third day came up and filled the garner of life. The spiritual Bread, as the Giver of it, quickeneth the spiritual spiritually, and he that receiveth it carnally, receiveth it rashly to no profit. This Bread of grace let the spirit receive discerningly as the medicine of life. . . . He that eateth of the Heavenly Bread, becometh heavenly without doubt." §

"I shall not be jealous, my Son, that Thou art with me, and also with all men. Be Thou God to him that confesseth Thee, and be Lord to him that serveth Thee, and be Brother to him that loveth Thee, that Thou mayest gain all. When Thou didst dwell in me, Thou didst also dwell out of me, and when I brought Thee forth openly, Thy hidden might was not removed from me. Thou art within me, and Thou art without me, O Thou that makest Thy Mother amazed; for I see that outward form of Thine before mine eyes; the hidden form is shadowed forth in my mind, O Holy One. In Thy visible form I see Adam, and in Thy hidden form I see Thy Father, who is blended with Thee. Hast Thou then shown me alone Thy beauty in two forms? Let Bread shadow forth Thee, and also the mind; dwell also in Bread and the eaters thereof. In secret, and openly too, may Thy Church see Thee, as well as Thy Mother. He that hateth Thy Bread is like unto him that hateth Thy Body. He that is far off that desireth Thy Bread, and he that is near that loveth Thy Image, are alike. In the Bread and in the Body, the first and also the last have seen Thee. Yet Thy visible Bread is far more precious

* *Threni B. M. V.* Opp. Gr. et Lat. Tom. iii. p. 574.

† See other passages referred to in *Index.*

‡ *In Natali Domini* i., Morris, p. 8. See S. Pet. Chrysol. *supra*, p. 58.

§ *In Nat. Dom.* Serm. iii. Opp. Syr. Tom. ii. Morris, p. 19.

than Thy Body; for Thy Body even unbelievers have seen, but they have not seen Thy Living Bread. They that were far off rejoiced; their portion utterly scorneth that of those that are near. Lo, Thy Image is shadowed forth in the Blood of the grapes * on the Bread; and it is shadowed forth on the heart with the finger of love, with the colours of faith. Blessed be He that by the Image of His Truth caused the graven images to pass away." †

"Thy visible generation is laid up with Thy Father. Angels are astonied at Thy smaller riches. A small drop, O Lord, of Thy history becomes with those below a flood of interpretations; for if John, even that great one, cried saying, 'I am not worthy, O Lord, to unloose the latchets of Thy shoes,' I will flee as that sinful woman to the shadow of Thy garments, that I may begin from thence; and as she who was affrighted, yet took heart, because she was made whole; heal my fright at the danger, and let me take heart in Thee, may I be also moved from Thy garment to Thy Body, that according to my power I may speak of Thee.

"Thy garment, Lord, is a fountain of medicines. In Thy visible vesture there dwelleth a hidden power. A little spittle from Thy mouth became also a great miracle of light in the midst of its clay. In Thy Bread is hidden the Spirit that cannot be eaten; in Thy Wine there dwelleth the Fire that cannot be drunk. The Spirit in Thy Bread and the Fire in Thy Chalice are distinct miracles, which our lips receive.

"When the Lord came down to the earth unto mortal men, He created them a new creation. ‡ As in the angels, He mingled Fire and the Spirit, that they might be of Fire and Spirit in a hidden manner. § The Seraph did not bring the living coal near with his fingers; it did but come close up to Isaias' mouth; he did not himself lay hold of it or eat it; but unto us the Lord hath given both of them. ¶ To the angels who are spiritual, Abraham brought bodily food, and they ate. ** A new miracle it is that our mighty Lord giveth to bodily creatures Fire and the Spirit, as food and drink. †† Fire came down upon sinners in wrath, and consumed them. ‡‡ The Fire of the Merciful in Bread cometh down and abideth. §§ Instead of that fire which devoured men, ye eat a Fire in Bread and are quickened. As fire came down on the sacrifice of Elias and consumed it, , the Fire of Mercy hath become to us a Living Sacrifice. Fire ate up the oblations, and we, O Lord, have eaten Thy Fire in Thy Oblation." ¶¶

S. BASIL OF SELEUCIA.

"As Mary looked at the Divine Infant, thus, methinks, swayed by fears

* "This alludes to a rite in the Syrian Liturgy, in which the officiating Priest is instructed to dip one portion of the consecrated Bread into the Chalice, and sprinkle the rest with it." Ben. "By the *colours of faith* he means the outward words used to paint it, so to say, on the mind."

† *In Nat. Dom. Serm.* xi. p. 429, Morris, p. 50.

‡ 2 *Cor.* v. 17. § *Ps.* ciii. 4. || *Is.* vi. 6.

¶ See S. Ephr. on *Ezech.* x. 2. S. Chrysost. *Hom.* 83 *in Matt.* S. Cyril. *C. Nest.* ii.

** *Gen.* xviii. 8. †† 1 *Cor.* xii. 13. ‡‡ 4 *Kings* i. 10, 12.

§§ "Fire entered into the womb, put on a body and went forth." Hymn i. *On the Birth of Christ*, etc., *infra*, ch. xi. and Hymn iv. 3, *On the Blessed Virgin.*

¶ 3 *Kings* xviii. 38. ¶¶ *Upon the Faith against Disputers*, Rhythm x. 2.

and longings she discoursed alone to herself: What fitting name, O Child, shall I find for Thee? Shall I call Thee Man? But Thy conception is divine. God? But Thou hast taken human flesh. What then am I to do with Thee? Shall I nourish Thee with milk, or shall I only meditate on Thee as God? Shall I tend Thee as mother, or adore Thee as handmaid? Shall I embrace Thee as Son, or pray to Thee as God? Shall I give Thee milk, or offer Thee incense? Whatever is this ineffable and most mighty marvel? Heaven is Thy throne, yet my bosom carries Thee. Thou art present whole to those on earth, yet in no way art Thou absent from those in heaven. For Thy descent is not restricted to this or that place, but divine is Thy condescension. I praise and extol Thy love for men, I search not out Thy economy." *

* *De Annunt. Deip.* Orat. x. P. G. Tom. 85, p. 448.

CHAPTER XI.

HYMNS OF S. EPHREM.

Between the years 1828 and 1841 a number of very valuable Syriac MSS. were brought by Lord Prudhoe, Rev. H. Tattam, and the Hon. R. Curzon from the Monastery of the Blessed Virgin at Scete in the Nitrian Desert * and successively deposited in the British Museum. It is mainly from these that Professor Lamy of Louvain has drawn his material for the three volumes of S. Ephrem's "Opera adhuc inedita" which he has recently published. From this work are taken the Hymns on Our Blessed Lady which follow in this Chapter, translated into English from the learned Editor's Latin version which is given by the side of the original Syriac.

It is evident that many of S. Ephrem's works were translated very early into Greek. For S. Jerome records that they had already in his time obtained so wide a fame as to be publicly read in some Churches after Holy Scripture, that he had himself read S. Ephrem's work on the Holy Ghost in a Greek translation, and had thence learned to appreciate the rare acumen and sublimity of the author's mind.† We may gather the same too from S. Gregory of Nyssa, who had no knowledge of Syriac, and yet cites several of S. Ephrem's works. ‡ They are also found quoted

* Situated between 30° and 31° N. lat., and as many of E. lat., about 35 miles to the left of the most western branch of the Nile. To the early Christians it was known as the Desert of Scete, and also called the Desert of the abbot Macarius. Mohammedans generally name it the Valley of Habîb. See Wright's *Catalogue of Syriac MSS. in the British Museum*, vol. iii., Preface. London, 1872; also Fessler's *Institutiones Patrologiæ*, re-edited by Prof. Jungmann, Tom. ii., § 135, *Scripta S. Ephraemi*, pp. 32-42. Œniponte 1892; and Lamy. *Prolegomena* to *S. Epraemi Syri Hymni et Sermones*, etc., iii. tomi in 4to. Mechliniæ, 1882-1890.

† *De Vir. Illustr.* 115.

‡ His *Confutatio Anomœorum adversus Novatum; Commentaria in V. et N. Testamentum*, which he describes in detail; *Sermones de pœnitentia; Testamentum S. Ephraemi*. From this last work S. Gregory relates the vision mentioned by all S. Ephrem's biographers: how, when but an infant in his mother's arms, a vine was seen growing on his tongue, which reached to

by S. Sabas in the Council of Chalcedon, 451.* Sozomen says that they were translated into Greek during the Saint's lifetime, and had thus come down to his own days losing hardly anything of their original force and excellence from translation. †

Several eminent writers, indeed, maintain that S. Ephrem himself not only translated some of his works into Greek, but also wrote some of them in Greek. They say that he was ignorant of Greek until he went to Cæsarea to visit S. Basil, whom he begged to obtain for him from God the knowledge of that language, which he then and there supernaturally received. Assemani and Peter Benedict, the learned Editors of S. Ephrem's Syriac and Greek works, affirm, with others also, that the Saint was proficient in Greek as well as Hebrew. There are many solid reasons for this opinion.‡

It was for the people especially, we know, that S. Ephrem composed his Hymns, in order to counteract the baneful influence of those of Bardesanes and other heretics, which were so widely diffused throughout Syria in early times. Now the fact that so many of S. Ephrem's Hymns are on the mystery of the Annunciation, and some also on that of the Purification, suggests the thought that these two mysteries of Our Blessed Lady were very popular amongst Christians in the East, and were consequently commemorated by special Festivals at the period when S. Ephrem wrote. We know, indeed, for certain, that the Feasts of Our Lord's Nativity, and the Epiphany, on which mysteries also the Saint wrote many Hymns, were already celebrated, both in the East and West.

It will be of interest therefore here to say something in detail on the origin and antiquity of these two Feasts of Our Blessed Lady. §

1. THE FEAST OF THE ANNUNCIATION.

The uniform belief of the faithful, that the 25th of March was the day on which the mystery of the Incarnation was accom-

heaven, bearing innumerable fruits, and with its dense foliage overshadowed the whole earth. And though multitudes thronged to gather the branches with their leaves and clusters of fruit, these were not diminished; nay rather, the greater the number of the gatherers, the richer was the plenteousness of the clusters. By the clusters were signified the Sermons, and by the leaves the Hymns; for thus S. Ephrem himself explains the vision.

* *Act.* 10. † *Hist. Eccles.* iii. 16.

‡ See Lamy, *Prolegomena*, vol. i. pp. xxii. sq.

§ For a more full and complete account, we refer the reader to the learned work of Benedict XIV., *Commentarius de Festis D. N. J. C., Matrisque Ejus Festis*, from which we here make extracts.

plished, rests, according to the express teaching of S. Augustine, on immemorial tradition authoritatively received and preserved by the Church.* Hence Benedict XIV. contends that the actual day was known from Apostolic tradition, in opposition to some Authors who say that this date was chosen simply because it was nine months before Christmas. We may easily and safely judge from this venerable and constant tradition, and also from the essential relation which the mystery itself bears to the entire Christian Faith, how early it would have been commemorated by a special Feast.

We have, however, no surviving record of its first institution; nor can we discover any certain and express mention of the Feast in writers of the first centuries. Pope S. Sergius I. (687-701) speaks of the Feast as of one held in his day of very ancient institution.† It is mentioned by the Council in Trullo (692), in an ancient Western Martyrology attributed by S. Bede to Cassiodorus, and by other authors to S. Jerome; and has its place, uniformly on the 25th of March, in the Greek Menologies and Menæa, in the Calendars and Martyrologies of the Copts, Syrians, Chaldeans, Ruthenians, as well as in the Sacramentary of S. Gregory, and generally in all the Missals, etc., of the West. From this universal diffusion of the Feast throughout Christendom, the Bollandists argue that it may be well considered to be of Apostolic origin; Benedict XIV. approves of this opinion, which well accords with the teaching of S. Augustine, that "What the Church universal holds, and which was not instituted by Councils, but has been always retained, is most rightly believed to have been handed down by no other than Apostolic authority."‡

The tenth Council of Toledo (656) ordered the Feast to be kept on the 18th of December in the Churches of Spain. This departure from the ancient practice of celebrating the mystery on the 25th of March was made on account of the inconvenience of keeping the Feast with due solemnity in Lent, or at the time of the Easter Festival.§

* "Sicut a Majoribus traditum suscipiens Ecclesiæ custodit auctoritas, Octavo Kalendas Aprilis conceptus creditur (Christus), quo et passus." *De Trin.* L. iv. c. iv.

† Many authors hold that the Feast was celebrated in the third century. See Migne's *Lat. Patrol.* Tom. 52, p. 575.

‡ "Quod universa tenet Ecclesia, nec Conciliis institutum, sed semper retentum est, non nisi auctoritate Apostolica traditum rectissime creditur." *De Baptismo contra Donatistas*, L. iv. c. xxiv.

§ In course of time however, the Church of Spain saw the necessity of returning to the practice of the Church of Rome, and of the Churches of the

2. THE PURIFICATION.

This Feast was called by the Greeks Hypante or Hyperpante from the meeting (ὑπαντήσις) of Simeon with Mary and Joseph, when they carried the Infant Jesus to the Temple. It was reckoned by the Greeks and in the Ambrosian Church amongst the Feasts of Our Lord Jesus Christ, but in the Roman Church amongst those of the Blessed Virgin. According to Baronius and others, the Feast of the Purification, with the Blessing of the Candles, was instituted by Pope S. Gelasius (492-496), when he abolished the old Pagan Feast of the *Lupercalia*,* and from Rome made its way into the East in the next century. But other eminent authors maintain on most solid grounds, that the Feast of the Purification was celebrated long before that date in many Churches of the East. In the ancient Martyrology attributed to S. Jerome, at the 2d of February is read, *The Purification of S. Mary, the Mother of Our Lord Jesus Christ;* and at the 5th of January, *In Jerusalem* (the commemoration) *of Simeon the prophet when Mary and Joseph offered to him the Lord Jesus Christ, and the prophet's own deposition.* Tillemont shows from the Life of the Abbot S. Theodosius, that most certainly the Feast of the Purification was used to be kept at Jerusalem about the middle of the sixth century, and that this was then no recent custom. Learned authors hold that in ancient times all the manifestations of Our Divine Lord were wont to be celebrated at the Feast of Epiphany—His Nativity, the Adoration of the Magi, the Meeting of Simeon (ὑπαντήσις)—together with the commemoration of that Saint—His Baptism, and First miracle at Cana.

The Bollandists give proofs that before the times of Justinian (527-565)—to whom, according to some authors the first institution of the Feast was due at Constantinople—the Purification was long wont to be celebrated in Phœnicia, Syria, Cyprus, and amongst the Copts, and they argue from this universality, according to

whole world. But such had been, for ages, the devotion of the people for the Feast of December 18th, that it was considered requisite to maintain some vestige of it. They discontinued, therefore, to celebrate the Annunciation on this day; but the faithful were invited to consider with devotion what must have been the sentiments of the holy Mother of God during the days immediately preceding her giving Him birth. A new Feast was then instituted under the name of *the Expectation of the Blessed Virgin's Delivery.* This Feast is now kept, not only throughout Spain, but also in most Churches of the Catholic world. Guéranger, *Liturgical Year, Advent*, p. 513. Ben. XIV. *De Festo Expectat. Part. B. V.* 18 Dec. ccxxv., ccxxvi. Also *De Fest. Annunt.* xliii.-xlvi.

* For the various opinions of authors on this point, see Guéranger, *Ib. Christmas*, vol. ii. p. 533.

the above quoted canon of S. Augustine,* that it is of Apostolic origin.†

Many writers are used to date the first institution of a Feast or other religious practice in the Church from the earliest recorded decree of some Pope or Council for its celebration. This is certainly a grave error, and the very reverse may be said to be the truth. For so far from such formal decree originating the custom, it was on the contrary the fact of the custom already existing, and being more or less widely diffused in the different Churches that led up to the issue of a general decree on the matter; and hence the origin of the custom must be always held to be considerably anterior to the positive and formal decree.

We give here—as in some way bearing on what we have been discussing—though it would have more properly found its place at our quotations from S. Gregory Thaumaturgus and S. Methodius—a remark of Abbé Martin:—

"Several Catholic writers hold that the Homilies attributed to S. Gregory Thaumaturgus and S. Methodius are not really theirs. Those of S. Gregory were very early translated into all the Eastern tongues, and this circumstance would be difficult to account for, if the writings themselves were apocryphal. Because one of the Homilies of S. Methodius has the title of the Purification, and that Feast was not established until A.D. 542, two hundred years after the death of the Saint, is no proof of its unauthenticity. Since all who have any acquaintance with the Fathers are well aware that the titles of homilies were not always given by their writers, but were often added afterwards. Hence from the fact that long before 542 Fathers wrote commentaries on the second chapter of S. Luke, it follows that Fathers had composed homilies on the Purification previously to the Institution of the Feast."‡

ON THE EPIPHANY.§

Hymn II.

12. The earth, whilst watering the fruits with its springs, adores at the same time the Son in the womb of His Mother, and contemplates the Infant most pure sucking virginal milk. Blessed be His good will.

13. . . . Whilst shedding forth the plants from its moistened bosom, the earth at the same time beholds Mary, *the thirsty ground*,‖ that yet gives a fruit wherein is contained an ocean of good things. To Him be exaltation.

* *De Baptismo*, L. iv. c. 24. † Ben. XIV., *Ib. De Fest. Purific.* xxiii.-xxv.
‡ *Anglican Ritualism*, p. 251, *note*, 1881. § Lamy, vol. i., pp. 4-144.
‖ *Is.* liii. 2. See *infra*, Hymn xviii., *On Christ's Resurrection*, strophe 2.

Hymn VIII.

1. God in His mercy hath inclined Himself to us. He has come down in order to mingle His grace with the waters [of baptism], and unite His Majesty to the weak bodies of men. He has descended into the waters that He might come to us and there remain, even as before of His mercy He descended into the womb of the Virgin, and there dwelt.* O Thou merciful God! who seizest on all occasions for abiding in us.

13. . . . The salt, cast of old into the springs by Eliseus, † made the waters sweet and drinkable: a type of that salt which, drawn forth from Mary, was mingled with the waters of baptism, and has healed the ulcers of our wounds.

Hymn XV.

MARY AND THE MAGI.

1. When the Son was born, light shone forth, darkness was chased away from earth, and the world was illumined. Let it, therefore, praise the Son, the Splendour of the Father, who illumined it.

2. He has sprung from the womb of the Virgin. As soon as He appeared the shadows gave way: by Him was the darkness of error banished, and the ends of the earth were enlightened. Let, then, praises be paid to Him.

3. Amongst the peoples was made great tumult, and light arose in darkness. The nations exulted to praise Him, who by His birth had enlightened them.

4. The blaze of His light went through the East; a star lit up Persia; the rising of Christ allured her, and announced to her that the Victim was come which moves all to rejoice.

5. Forthwith the precursor-star shone out amid the darkness, and called on the peoples to come and enjoy the great light that was come down upon earth.

6. The firmament sent one of the stars to the Persians, that they might haste to meet the King, and adore Him.

7. Great Assyria, well-instructed, called the Magi, saying: "Take presents and go to Judæa, to honour the King there born."

8. The princes of Persia with exultation took presents from their country, and brought to the Son of the Virgin gold, myrrh, and frankincense.

9. Entering the house of the poor little Maid, they found therein the

* Compare with this the Prayer at the Blessing of the Font on Holy Saturday:—". . . Look, O Lord, on the face of Thy Church, and multiply in her Thy regenerations, who by the streams of Thy abundant grace fillest Thy City with joy; and openest the fonts of Baptism all over the world, for the renovation of the Gentiles: that by the command of Thy Majesty she may receive the grace of Thy Only Son from the Holy Ghost, who, by a secret mixture of His divine virtue, may render this water fruitful for the regeneration of men, to the end that those who have been sanctified in *the immaculate womb* of this divine font, being born again a new creature, may come forth a heavenly offspring: and that all that are distinguished either by sex in body, or by age in time, may be brought forth to the same infancy by grace, their spiritual mother. . . ."

† 4 *Kings* ii. 21.

Infant lying; and drawing nigh to Him, they adored with exultation, and opened their treasures before Him.*

10. Thereat said Mary: For whom are these? For what cause? And what may be the reason that has called you from your country, that ye should come with your treasures to the Child?

11. They make answer: Thy Son is a King; and on His head are gathered all diadems in one, since of all is He King: His power is more high than the world, and His empire all things obey.

12. When was it ever that such a poor little girl gave birth to a king? Helpless and needy am I, how could a king come forth from me?

13. Aye, to thee alone has this happened, that a great King should go forth from thee. In thee shall poverty be magnified, and to thy Son shall diadems be subjected.

14. Treasures of kings I possess not; riches have never come to my lot. Behold a poor little house, and an empty home: Why then proclaim you my Son a king?

15. A great treasure is thy Son: His riches suffice to make all rich. Treasures of kings will sometimes fail, but He can neither fail, nor be ever measured.

16. Go, inquire, lest some other be your king that is born. This is the son of a poor little mother who is quite unfit for seeing a king.

17. Can it be that light shot forth should bend aside from its course? It was no darkness that called and led us hither, but light directed our steps. A King thy Son is.

18. You see a little babe that cannot speak and His mother's house empty and bare. Nought of royalty is in it; How should appear therein a king?

19. True, we see a King who cannot speak, tranquil and lowly, as thou hast said; but we see at the same time the stars in heaven hastening to announce Him.

20. Ye men, you must inquire who the King is, before you adore Him, lest you should perchance have gone a wrong way, and some other be the new-born King.

21. Maiden, thou must believe that we have been instructed by a star that cannot go wrong, that thy Son is the King—besides, very plain was the way by which the star led us.

22. He is but a little tiny infant; and lo, as you may see, He has neither royal diadem, nor throne. What have you then seen to make you pour forth your treasures, and honour Him as King?

23. A little one He is because Himself has so willed; and He loves meekness and humility until He is made manifest. But the time will be, when before Him all diadems shall bow down, and shall adore Him.

* "*In the second year* of Our Saviour's nativity the Magi exult, the Pharisees are sad, the treasures are opened, kings are in trouble and fear, the infants are slaughtered. In it oblations, some beautiful, others humble, are offered in Bethlehem. For love offered gold, and envy offered infants with the sword." —*Hymni de Nativ.* ii. 2, Lamy, vol. ii., p. 435. See also *infra*, p. 406. ". . . From early times the feast of the Epiphany has been celebrated, as now, on the twelfth day after Christmas Day. . . . If the visit of the Kings were a year and twelve days after the Nativity, its anniversary would be on the same day as if the interval were . . . twelve days only. . . ."—Fr. Coleridge, *Life of our Life*, vol. i., pp. 58, 59.

24. My Son has neither armies, nor legions, nor troops; He is lying in His Mother's poverty. Why do you call Him King?

25. Heavenly are the armies of thy Son; in the firmament do they move; everywhere do they spread abroad their glittering rays: from amongst them one has come to call us. Our whole country was in alarm.

26. Quite recent is the infant. How then should He be a king, since to the world He is unknown? How could this little one reign over men powerful and renowned?

27. Old is thy little one, O Virgin. He is the Ancient of days, and before all times. Adam is much His junior. By Him shall all things be renewed.

28. Surely it behoves you to expose the whole mystery; and explain who revealed to you the mystery of my Son, who in your parts is a King.

29. It behoves thee also to acknowledge, that had not the truth of the matter impelled us, we certainly should not have travelled from the ends of the earth, and come hither on account of thy Son.

30. Open to me now, as friends, the whole mystery as it took place amongst you in your country. Who called you to come to me?

31. A great star appeared to us, more splendid than all the other stars. With its light our land was lit up. It gave to us the news that a King was born.

32. I should be loath that you tell this story in our country, lest the kings of our land from envy lay snares for the Infant.

33. Fear not, O Virgin; for thy Son will bring to nought all diadems, and tread them under foot; nor by their envy will the kings have power to hurt Him.

34. I fear Herod, that unclean fox, lest he perturb me, and, drawing his sword, cut off the sweet cluster whilst yet unripe.

35. From Herod fear nought, because by thy Son it is that his throne subsists. For as soon as thy Son shall have begun to reign, Herod's throne will be destroyed, and his crown will fall to the ground.

36. A very torrent of blood is Jerusalem: in it all the best men are being slaughtered: if he should have his attention drawn to the Infant, he will fall on Him. Therefore speak secretly, and act without noise.

37. All the torrents and swords shall be laid at rest through thy Son. Blunted is the sword of Jerusalem, and refuses to serve for slaughters.

38. The scribes and priests of Jerusalem help on the shedding of blood, and are void of understanding: deadly strife will they stir up against me, and against the Child. Magi, I beg you, keep silence.

39. The scribes and priests will not avail in their envy to harm thy Son, who will do away with their priesthood, and make their solemnities come to an end.

40. The Angel revealed to me when I conceived, that my Son would be King, and signified to me, as he has done to you, that His crown is from on high and can never be broken.

41. The Angel, then, of whom thou speakest, the same under form of a star,* has appeared and announced to us that thy Son will be greater and more glorious than all stars.

* This view was not unknown to the ancients. S. Chrysostom (*Hom.* 6 *in Matt.* ii.) teaches that this star was not one of the other stars, but a certain invisible power that showed itself under the appearance of a star. Gregory

42. The Angel who appeared to me explained at the Annunciation that *His kingdom would have no end;* but that the secret must be kept, and not be made known.

43. The star too signified to us that thy Son should preserve His crown. So it was the Angel who changed his appearance, which he did not manifest to us.

44. When the Angel appeared to me, he called Him before He was conceived, his Lord,* and announced to me that He was the Son of the Most High, but where is His Father, he did not say.

45. The Angel under appearance of the star announced to us, that the Lord of heaven was born, and that thy Son reigns over the stars; and that these rise not without His command.

46. Beloved, to you are made known the other mysteries that you may confirm them. A Virgin, I have brought forth a Son. He is the Son of God. Go then and proclaim Him.

47. Already has the Star made us to know that His birth is above the order of nature. Thy Son is above all; the self-same is the Son of God.

48. Heaven and earth, all the angels, and the stars, bear testimony concerning Him, that He is indeed the Son of God, and Lord. Go spread these things throughout your regions.

49. From out of the entire heaven one single star has stirred together Persia, which is certified that thy Son is the Son of God, and that to Him all nations will be made subject.

50. Carry back peace to your countries: may peace be multiplied in your bounds: may you be deemed trustworthy heralds of the truth throughout your journey.

51. May the peace of thy Son lead us back safe to our country even as it has brought us thence, and when He shall have entered upon His empire of the world may He visit our land to bestow upon it His benediction.

52. May Persia rejoice at your tidings; may Assyria exult at your return; and when the reign of my Son shall arise, Himself will plant His standard in your country.

53. Let the Church sing out with gladness: Glory to the Son of the Most High by whom the heights and the depths are illumined. Blessed is He who by His birth has made all things joyful.

We here give the following from an extant fragment of the Chronography of Julius Africanus, as it serves to illustrate the foregoing Hymns of S. Ephrem on the Epiphany. The Author says that the facts here recorded "were inscribed on golden plates, laid up in the royal temples of Persia."

Barhebræus (*Comment. in Matt.*, ed. J. Spanut) records as follows the opinions of the Syrians: "Some say that an angel appeared to the Magi under form of a star; according to others, a maiden with an infant in her bosom was seen in the star; according to others, letters indicating Christ's birth were inscribed in it; lastly, others said that Balaam, their father, or Zoraster, their prophet, disclosed to them the meaning of the star. On this star see S. Thomas, *Summa*, P. 3, q. 36, a. 7.

* Alluding to the reading, "Our Lord is with thee," found in several Eastern versions, see *infra, Hymn on the Blessed Virgin* xi., 9.

". . . And we came to that place then to which we were sent, and saw the Mother and the Child, the Star indicating to us the royal Babe. And we said to the Mother: What art thou named, O renowned Mother? And she says: Mary, masters. And we said to her: Whence art thou sprung (ὁρμωμένη)? And she replies: From this district of the Bethlemites (Βηθλεωτῶν). Then said we: Hast thou not had a husband? And she answers: I was only betrothed with a view to the marriage covenant, my thoughts being far removed from this. For I had no mind to come to this. And while I was giving very little concern to it, when a certain Sabbath dawned, and straightway at the rising of the sun, an angel appeared to me bringing me suddenly the glad tidings of a son. And in trouble I cried out, Be it not so to me, Lord, for I have not a husband. And he persuaded me to believe that by the will of God I should have this Son.

"Then said we to her: Mother, Mother, all the gods of the Persians have called thee Blessed. Thy glory is great; for thou art exalted above all women of renown, and thou art shown to be more queenly than all queens.

"The Child, moreover, was seated on the ground, being, as she said, in His second year,* and having in part the likeness of His Mother. And she had long hands, and a body somewhat delicate; and her colour was like that of ripe wheat (σιτόχροος), and she was of a round face, and had her hair bound up. And as we had along with us a servant skilled in painting from the life, we brought with us to our country a likeness of them both; and it was placed by our hand in the sacred (διοπετεῖ) temple, with this inscription on it: 'To Jove the Sun, the Mighty God, the King of Jesus, the power of Persia dedicated this.'

"And taking the Child up, each of us in turn, and bearing Him in our arms, we saluted and worshipped Him, and presented to Him gold, and myrrh, and frankincense, addressing Him thus: We gift Thee with Thine own, O Jesus, Ruler of heaven. Ill would things unordered be ordered, wert Thou not at hand. In no other way could things heavenly be brought into conjunction with things earthly, but by Thy descent. Such service cannot be discharged, if only the servant is sent us, as when the Master Himself is present, neither can so much be achieved when the king sends only his satraps to war, as when the king is there himself. It became the wisdom of Thy system, that Thou shouldst deal in this manner with men.

"And the Child leaped and laughed at our caresses and words. And when we had bidden the Mother farewell (συνταξάμενοι), and when she had shown us honour, and we had testified to her the reverence which became us, we came again to the place in which we lodged. And at eventide there appeared to us one of a terrible and fearful countenance, saying: Get ye out quickly, lest ye be taken in a snare. And we in turn said: And who is he, O divine leader, that plotteth against so august an embassage? And he replied: Herod; but get you up straightway, and depart in safety and peace.

"And we made speed to depart thence in all earnestness; and we reported in Jerusalem all that we had seen. Behold, then, the great things that we have told you concerning Christ; and we saw Christ our Saviour, who was made known as both God and man. To Him be the glory and the power unto the ages of ages. Amen." †

* See Supra, *Hymn xv.*, p. 403, *footnote.*

† Ante-Nicene Christian Library, vol. ix. (2d part) p. 201 *sq.*

ON THE BIRTH OF CHRIST IN THE FLESH.*

Hymn I.

5. With praises will I celebrate the Nativity of the Only-begotten. I will sing in what way Divinity wove for itself a garment in the womb. In birth He put it on, and from the womb went forth, but in death He put it off. Once did He put it off, twice did He put it on. The left hand assumed the garment, then He put it off, and replaced it on the right hand.

6. In a small bosom dwelt the power that rules all things. Whilst He was there dwelling, He was holding the reins of the universe; He was making an offering to His Father, to accomplish His will; the heavens and all creatures were being replenished by Him. The Sun entered into the womb, whilst its rays were being diffused amongst the heights above, and the nethermost depths.

7. He dwelt in the spacious bosoms of all creatures, but they were all too narrow to contain the greatness of the Only-begotten. How then could suffice for Him the bosom of Mary? That it sufficed is wonderful, that it should not have sufficed is ambiguous. Of all the bosoms that received Him, one certainly sufficed for Him, the Bosom of the Great Father who from eternity begot Him.

8. Equal is the bosom that received Him, if it received Him whole, to the Bosom all-exceeding that begot Him. But who will dare to say that a little bosom, weak and vile, is equal to the Bosom of the Supreme Being? Yet there dwelt in that little bosom, for His mercy's sake, He whose subsistence is so great that it cannot by aught be circumscribed.

13. Who would not be astounded at seeing Mary, David's daughter, with the seal of virginity inviolate, carrying her Infant? The divine Virgin lays Him in her bosom, and, exulting with joy, sings to Him her lullabies. Angels are jubilant, Seraphim proclaim Him Thrice-Holy; the Magi offer grateful gifts to the new-born Son.

16. He who rose from table and ministered to slaves is now adored, seated at His Father's right hand. Him whom the scribes once scorned, the Seraphim proclaim Thrice-Holy. Adam had wished secretly to steal for himself this Divine glory; but the Serpent saw to what a height he had been exalted, and caused him to fall; he made him fall by seducing him. Eve crushed the Serpent under her feet because he had cast the poison of sin in her ears.

22. The Only-begotten entered into the womb, and the chaste Virgin suffered no scath. He came down into the womb, and went forth in childbirth; the Virgin most beautiful felt that He was born. Girt about with invisible glory He was hidden at His coming in, but mean and manifest was He at His going out, because He was God at His coming in, and man at His going out. A thing wondrous to hear and impenetrable to the understanding; Fire entered into the womb, put on a body, and went forth.

Hymn II.

23. Let maidens give thanks to Mary most pure, for that, whereas through their mother Eve their disgrace had its growth, now through their sister Mary, greatly has grown their glory. Blessed is He who sprung from them.

* VIII. Hymns, Lamy, vol. ii. pp. 429-510.

31. The Lord said that Satan had fallen from heaven. That cursed one had exalted himself, but was cast down from his exaltation. The foot of Mary trod under her heel him who with his heel had wounded Eve.* Blessed is He who by His birth laid him prostrate.

Hymn III.

4. Glory be to Him who has made Himself the lowest, though by nature He is the Highest. Of His love He has become the Only-begotten of Mary, He who is the Only-begotten of the Godhead. He has become by name the offspring of Joseph, though He is the Offspring of the Most High. Of His own will was He made man, though by nature He is God. Glory be to Thy Will, and to Thy Nature. Blessed be Thy Majesty that has clothed itself with our image.

5. Thy Divine Birth, Lord, was the mother of creatures: being again in labour it brought forth humanity, which in its turn brought forth Thee. Humanity brought forth Thee corporally, whilst Thou didst bring forth it spiritually. The whole sufficient cause why Thou camest to birth was, that Thou mightest beget man to Thy likeness. Thy Birth has become the generation of all. Blessed is He who made Himself young that He might renew all things.

11. The bosom of Mary has astounded me, that it should have had room for Thee, O Lord, and have embraced Thee. Entire creation was too narrow to unfold Thy amplitude. Earth and heaven were too small, that by them, as though with two wings, Thy Divinity should be covered. Earth's bosom was too strait for Thee, and Mary's bosom was too broad. In the bosom of Mary He dwelt, and in her bosom He gave health to men.

Hymn V.

6. Blessed art thou, O Church ; for that Micheas proclaimed: *The Pastor shall go forth from Ephrata.*† Since to Bethlehem He came, that from her He might take to Himself the rod of Jesse wherewith to rule the nations. Blessed thy lambs that are marked with His sign, and thy sheep that are kept by His word. Thou, O Church, art the abiding Bethlehem [House of bread], for in thee is the Bread of Life.‡

11. Blessed art thou Ephrata, mother of kings, because from thee is sprung the Lord of crowns. Micheas announced to thee that He is from eternity, and His times circumscribed by no limits. Blessed are thine eyes, which of all others were the first to behold Him. For to thee did He give the signal honour of seeing Him as soon as He was born—Him, the head of benedictions, and beginning of joys. These before all others didst thou receive.

12. Blessed art thou, Bethlehem, because cities and fortified towns have envied thee, even as the noble women and virgins envied Mary. Blessed is the Maiden whom the Lord deemed worthy for His dwelling-place ; and to be

* Here is a striking confirmation of the Vulgate reading of *Gen.* iii. 15, and of Mary's Immaculate Conception. See also above, *Hymn* i. 16.

† *Mich.* v. 2.

‡ "The Church has given us the Living Bread in place of the Azymes that Egypt gave. Mary has given us the Living Bread, in place of the bread of weariness that Eve gave." *Hymn. Azymor.* iv. 6, 7. Lamy, vol. i. p. 593.

as though the village meet for His home. He chose for His own a poor maiden, and a small village, that thus He might humble Himself.

13. Blessed art thou, Bethlehem, because in thee the Son, who from eternity is in the Father, took beginning. Hard it is to conceive how He, who exists before all time, made Himself in thee subject to times. Blessed are thy ears that had the first-fruits of the arrival of the Lamb of God, who bounded in thee. But since thy manger was too narrow, the Son stretched Himself abroad to all the regions of the world, and was by all of them adored.

14. Blessed art thou Mary. For on thy Infant's account great and high is thy name. Art thou able to tell how, in what guise, and where, that Greatest One who became a mean and little one, dwelt in thee?* Blessed is thy mouth that uttered praises, and curiously questioned not. Blessed thy tongue that gave glory, and was not inquisitive. Even His Mother was held as though in suspense regarding the mystery whilst she was carrying Him. Who then shall suffice to search into Him?

15. O woman, whom man knew not—How are we able to behold the Son thou didst bring forth? For verily, eye is unable to bear His glorious transfigurations. Hidden in Him are tongues of fire: since tongues of fire He sent down after His Ascension. Let all bear in mind that He into whom we search is fire and flame.

17. The Archangel gave thee peace, O Mary, as though an earnest and pledge of sanctity. Earth was to Christ as a new heaven, because the Watches (Vigiles) came down and glorified Him in thee. The sons of the Most High stood around thy dwelling on account of the King's Son who had His abode in thee. Through this angels' watch thy earthly dwelling was made like to the heaven above.

Hymn VI.

8. Let the fifth day praise the Son, who on the fifth day created the reptiles and sea monsters, of whose kind was the serpent. He by fraud deceived our Mother, stupid maiden. The fraud of the deceiver, who made a fool of the maid, was shown up by the Dove. From the virginal womb arose and went forth He, the Wise, who trampled down the Cheat.

Hymn VII.

8. *Behold a Virgin shall conceive and bring forth* with intact purity. Like a dream it seems to me, or a vision of one half-asleep: for, lo, on my knees is Emmanuel (God with us); I will give over all things else, and will celebrate the praise of the Lord of all, all the days of my life.

9. Even because the Assyrians had brought to confusion the virgins in Sion, the Magi have honoured Thy Mother, O virgin Child, who didst clothe Thyself with the garments of Thy Mother's virginity, and wentest forth with them unstained. Thou to me art Infant, and Spouse, and Son, and God.

18. Because Thy sublimity is too great for Thy Mother, I will sit and be still. Be Thou to me a haven of refuge. O Nature great and incomprehensible, allow Thy Mother to set silence upon her mouth in Thy presence.

* "No one, Lord, knows by what name he should call Thy Mother. Should he call her Virgin? But her Child is there. Should he call her a married wife? But her virginal seals are inviolate. Now if no one can reach in mind to Thy Mother, who may search out Thee?"—S. Ephr., Lamy, vol. iii. p. xix.

ON THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY.*

Hymn I.

1. The Virgin has invited me to sing of her mystery, which with awe I contemplate. Grant me, O Son of God, Thy wondrous gift, that I may enrich my harp, and depict the image most beautiful of Thy Mother.

2. In her womb offspring without human co-operation, O great prodigy! In her breasts milk, contrary to the usual order of nature; perfect virginity together with milk in a body all-pure, O marvel! Who can tell of such things?

3. Holily did the Virgin Mary give birth to her Son, and give milk to the Nourisher of the nations, and support on her virginal knees Him who upholds all things. Virgin she is, and Mother; and what is she not?

4. Holy is she in body, beautiful in soul, pure in mind, unalloyed in intelligence, most perfect in sense, clean of heart, well-approved, and full of every virtue.

5. Let the whole order of virgins rejoice in Mary, because she alone of them so disposed herself that she might bring forth the Hero that bears up all creation, by whom the human race that groaned under slavery has been set free.

6. Let great Adam, struck down by the serpent, take joy in Mary. She it was who gave to Adam the new graft, nurtured wherewith he crushed the abhorred viper, and to strength recovered from its deadly bite.

7. Let priests rejoice in the Blessed Virgin who gave birth to the great Priest made victim: since He freed them from victims, and became Himself the Victim that appeased the Father.

8. Let the whole order of prophets rejoice in Mary; because in her their visions have found their term, and prophecies their completion, and oracles their confirmation and strength.

9. Let the whole order of patriarchs rejoice in Mary. For as she obtained their benediction, so also did she render them perfect in her Son; since by Him have seers, just men, and priests been purified.

10. Instead of the bitter fruit that Eve plucked from the tree, sweet Fruit has Mary given to men. Lo, with Mary's Fruit the whole world is delighted.

11. The Tree of Life that was hidden in the midst of paradise, has had its growth in Mary, and going forth from her has protected the world with its shade, and shed its fruits abroad, upon the far off, and the near at hand.

12. Mary wove a vestment of glory and gave it to our first parent. He who had been stripped naked among the trees, clad therewith, was adorned with modesty and the beauty of virtue. To him whom the wife had laid low, the daughter gave support: and thus uplifted, he arose a hero.

13. Eve and the Serpent dug a pit, wherein they cast Adam headlong. But Mary and her royal Babe opposed themselves, and going down, drew him forth from the abyss by means of that hidden mystery, which, when made known, brought Adam back to life.

14. The virginal vine gave the grape whose sweet wine brought solace to them that wept. Eve and Adam afflicted with mourning tasted of the medicine of life, and therein found consolation for their tears.

* Lamy, vol. ii. pp. 519-642.

Hymn II.

Respons. Blessed is He who is born of the Virgin Mary, and has saved us.

1. By gift of Thine, will I utter wise songs in honour of the Virgin, who through miracle has been made a Mother. Virgin she is and Mother. Glory be to Him who has chosen her.

2. In the throng of chaste virgins holily she stands, and tranquilly bears the fruit of mothers. Who is not astounded that a Virgin has a babe?

3. The virginity of women remains not intact together with milk; for where is milk, virginity is no longer. In Mary is the marvel, that virgin she brought forth.

4. A field there is that knew never the ploughman's furrow; wherefrom rose up a sheaf of benediction, and unsown, yielded fruit to the world.

5. A ship there is laden with priceless treasure, that to the poor brought heavenly riches. The dead are enriched by her that bore their Life.

6. In Mary all virgins glory, for that a Virgin is she who was the cause of all good things. From her arose light to them that sit in darkness.

7. In Mary is again raised up the bowed down head of Eve. Because Mary received the Infant who seized upon the serpent. The leaves of shame are now exchanged for glory.

8. Two virgins have been given to the human race: one was the cause of life, the other of death. By Eve came death, and by Mary life.

9. The daughter raised up her fallen mother. Because the mother had put on the leaves of shame, the daughter wove for her, and gave her a garment of glory.

10. The female sex gained hope through Mary. Because envy had tainted women's ears, and shame their cheeks, Mary freed them, and made them without reproach.

11. All wives to-day are full of joy, because, even as they, Mary bore fruit, but a fruit that gives life to their children. Glory to Him who sent her.

12. Through Mary has arisen light which has scattered the darkness that came through Eve, and has spread its shining over the human race. The world that lay in darkness has through Mary been filled with light.

Hymn III.

Respons. Blessed is He who was wondrously born of thee.

1. Let chaste Mary give praise to her Son who of His mercy sprang from the bosom most pure of a Virgin inviolate. The Mother by miracle brought forth the Son of God who has now appeared.

2. On this solemnity with loud voice let Mary cry out amongst the crowds: "Let no one pry into my Son, for no one, in truth, is able to search Him out, here all inquisition is useless and vain, and not all the wise can avail for such investigation."

3. Let her, the most pure, lift up to Thee her voice, O Lord, and sing praise; because Thy love has drawn Thee to be born, to dwell in a virginal bosom, and thence to come forth manifestly. Blessed art Thou, O Hidden One, who hast visited us.

4. Let the mouth of Mary cast contempt on the foolish ones who pry into Thy glorious Birth. By Mary may the learned be despised, who would seek to dispute with Thee. May she bring to repentance those who doubt, because one who knew not man hath given birth.

Hymn IV.

1. Ye virgin bands exult in a Virgin altogether admirable. It is she that brought forth the Giant who bound with chains the rebel angel, lest he should lead virgins astray.

2. That rebellious one had deceived your mother Eve, who ate of the deadly fruit. Your sister Mary uprooted the tree that brought forth death, and gave the Fruit that gives life to all.

3. In Mary's womb Fire lies hid, in her bosom is a mighty prodigy. With her fingers Mary lays hold on Fire; in her bosom she bears the sun: her mystery keeps in dread those who fain would utter it.

4. The Fashioner of babes she has borne, the Maker of man's race she has brought forth: to the Nourisher of all she has given of her milk. Who shall be able to speak of what is altogether marvellous?

5. Full of wondering awe, wise of soul, holy in body, pure in thoughts, was Mary as she carried the Flame.

6. How were it possible that wondering awe should leave her soul, or amazement her mind, or feeling of astonishment her senses, when giving birth she remained a Virgin?

7. She was carrying her Infant in her arms, and knew that her virginity was intact: milk was flowing in her breasts, yet with virginity unscathed; all the day long the Blessed Virgin was filled with wonder and admiration.

8. Very discreet were her blandishments; when others were present she caressed Him as an infant, when they were gone she adored Him as the Lord of Majesty.

9. Whilst she was carrying the Babe in her bosom, her soul was filled with wonder. She gloried in that Infant as her Son, and recognised Him at the same time as her Lord, and so bore Him at once as her Son and her Lord.

10. Him whom she had carried, she now beheld born, and with her virginity still preserved. This new prodigy before her strengthened her to understand that the Infant she bore was God.

11. The Virgin, filled with awe, kept carefully the mystery hidden, well knowing Who and Whose Son was the blessed Fruit she carried; for all these things she clearly understood.

12. Ezechiel, son of the Transmigration, in prophetic vision beheld the Virgin, David's daughter, and portrayed her image in divine revelations.

13. The prophet depicted the likeness of the Chaldæan Mary, placed it in the book of prophets, and willed that the things concerning the Virgin should be preserved in the Scriptures, that he who reads may understand.

14. The Lord showed to the prophet in the Sacred courts the Closed Gate, and said to him: *This gate shall be shut, because God shall enter in by it.**

Hymn V.

Respons. Blessed is He who of His goodness made thee for Himself a mother, and was born of thee, and going forth illumined creation.

1. The scribe and the disputer hear that a Virgin brings forth, and believe not, because they see that it is naturally impossible for pure virgins to give birth. In Mary nature yielded and was conquered; since as a Virgin Mary

* *Ezech.* xliv. 1, 2.

conceived, and as a Virgin brought forth. By this road nature certainly cannot tread.

2. The Infant was born into the world like other children. But His Mother was a Virgin: endued with prodigy, she bore her Fruit whilst her womb remained sealed and closed. New therefore was the way whereby the prodigy came that the Virgin was with child. . . .

3. I will celebrate the Virgin by grace made Mother of the Lord of all. In virginity she conceived, in virginity she gave birth: a marvel wholly unheard of in the world. A Son most wonderful she brought forth: but how He was made exceeds our thought: the learned are powerless to search into the mystery.

4. A Maiden has milk, a Virgin a Child. Who will not be astonished at the glorious Mother in her childbirth, as she suckles her Babe, and to mothers is in all things like? Let the scribe blush, who would pry into the divine Mother, as to how she was made her Creator's Mother.

5. The figures of thee, O Virgin, are laid up in the ark of the covenant. Prophecy depicted thy likeness, and stored it in the Sacred books for him who understands. Those books showed thee forth under the new urn.* Thy Son was the salt that savoured the font whereby the world, that slept in death, came again to life.

6. They prefigured thee also by the rod that was kept in the ark, which though not planted, put forth blossom, to signify thy conception and childbirth. The rod without culture was crowned with leaves, a figure of the Virgin who brought forth the miraculous Fruit which she gave to us. Thus in type was this Virgin designated by the Levites' rod.†

7. Neither before nor afterwards on earth did another tree bring forth a lamb, nor any other virgin give birth to child. Mary and the tree are one. The Lamb hung on the branches, even our Lord on Golgotha. The lamb saved Isaac, and the Lord His creatures.‡

8. When He came down to earth He left not His heavenly chariot. When He was dwelling in Mary, heaven lacked Him not: when He was sleeping in the ship, no other than He rebuked the wind: when He changed water into wine, the Word was not apart from His body: but hereby He showed that He is in all things, God.

Hymn VI.

Respons. Blessed is He who dwelt in the altogether wondrous Virgin. Sprung and gone forth from her, He has illumined the world.

* He alludes to *the golden pot that had manna*, which was kept in the ark of the testament. *Heb.* ix. 4.

† That is, by the rod of Aaron who belonged to the tribe of Levi. *Numb.* xvii. 1.

‡ *Gen.* xxii. 13. S. Ephrem interprets the words of Genesis thus: *Abraham raising his eyes saw a ram that was hanging by its horns to a tree;* adding the following comment: "That the ram was not there before, is evident from Isaac's question; and that the tree was not there, the wood borne on Isaac's shoulders gives evidence. The mountain produced the tree, and the tree shed forth the ram; that the ram which hung thereon, and was afterwards sacrificed in Isaac's stead, might presignify His day, who hung upon the wood of the Cross as though a lamb, and tasted death for the whole world." *Comment.* ad loc. Opp. Syr.

1. Come hither, ye virgin bands, make applause, sing hymns of praise, because the Virgin has brought forth a great prodigy, and cast in astonishment all her companions.

2. Isaias called all the young maidens together, and revealed to the virgins the mystery, that a Virgin who knew not man should conceive and holily give birth to a marvel.

3. By revelation did Isaias speak, and a fluttering came upon the virgins, to know who and what might she be, where, and when, this wonderful thing should have place.

4. The prophet's voice raised a stir amongst the Hebrew virgins, when to them he sang the news: *A Virgin shall conceive:* chaste virgins were in commotion at the prediction of this marvel.

5. *A Virgin shall conceive*, sang Isaias; but explained not who, nor where, nor when. In Mary the prophecy deeply resounded, since by that utterly wondrous Virgin the oracle became known and manifest.

6. The prophet by his revelations cast the young maidens in much excitement. Hence multiplied were their questionings as to when this new work should happen, that a Virgin should conceive according to the prophet's prediction.

7. In Mary all the secrets hidden in the books of the prophets meet with their explanation. From her hath arisen the Sun of Justice who by His rising has illumined the whole earth.

8. Mary was the vine, from which—as was written * to fulfil the mystery of prophecy—budded the Nazarene shoot that was nurtured in Nazareth,† in order that all things might be accomplished.

9. The waters shut up within the veil, are the Offspring by divine conception inclosed in the Virgin. In Mary are fulfilled all similitudes: in her signs and oracles have had their completion.

Hymn VII.

1. Come ye wise men, let us admire with wonder the Virgin Mother, David's most beautiful daughter, who has given birth to a prodigy; let us marvel at the spring that has produced the Fountain, at the ship of joys that has brought the burden of the Father's tidings, at her who received and carried in her pure bosom the great Ruler of Creation through whom peace has reigned on earth and in heaven.

* *Is.* xi. 1.—The reading in the Vulgate is: "There shall come *a rod* (virga) out of the root of Jesse." Interpreters differ as to the meaning of the word in the Hebrew. S. Ephrem understood it to signify *a shoot* (surculus). For he thus speaks in his *Evangelii Concordantis Expositio*, published from the Armenian version, by G. Mœsinger, Venetiis, 1876, p. 36: "It is said (*Matt.* ii. 23), *Nazoræus vocabitur*, because the rod in Hebrew is Nazor, and the prophet calls Him a Son of Nazor (a rod, virgæ), since He is in truth, Son of the rod." —Greg. Barhebræus in his *Scholia in Matt.*, ed. J. Spanuth, Gottingæ, 1879, p. 7, quotes S. Ephrem, and says: "*Nazaræus vocabitur*, this, which is not known from the prophet, Matthew knew either from tradition or from the Holy Ghost. And Mar Ephræm has said that a stem, or shoot is called in Hebrew, Nuzor."

† "From a little vine sprouted forth a shoot, which has overshadowed the entire world with its clusters." Hymn vi. *On the Crucifixion*, n. 9. Lamy, vol. i. p. 689.

2. Come let us admire the Virgin most pure, who, herself all-wonderful, alone amongst creatures has given such a birth, unknown by men. Full of awe was the soul of the Virgin most pure, and daily did her mind with joy give glory for two things that seemed incapable of union, her perfect virginity, and her Infant beloved. Blessed be He who sprung from her.

3. The tender dove bears the Eagle of years. As she carries her bird, with fond little canticles softly she warbles His praises: O Son most rich, who hath willed to be nurtured in a tiny nest, O Harp of praises, that, as an infant, is silent, bid me sing to Thee with a harp which by its melody may move the Cherubim. Bid me to speak of Thee.

4. Thy place, my Son, is high above that of all others, and, because Thou hast so willed, me hast Thou made Thy place.* For Thy Majesty the heavens are all too strait, and yet a poor little one carries Thee. Let Ezechiel come and behold Thee on my knees, prostrate let him adore, and acknowledge Thee to be Him whom he saw on the throne that was set upon the Cherubim's chariot: and let him call me Blessed on account of Him whom I bear.

5. Astonished at me was Ezechiel's chariot when it beheld its Driver carried by me. Lo, with awe the Cherubim cry out: *Blessed be Thy Majesty from Thy place.* † Behold in me is Thy place, and my bosom Thy dwelling. Upon my knees thou abidest, and Thy Majesty's throne is upheld in my arms; my fingers are the wheels of Thy chariot. With the Cherubim will I cry out: *Blessed art Thou from Thy place.*

6. The prophet Isaias proclaimed: *Behold, a Virgin shall conceive and bring forth.* Come, look on me, and rejoice together with us. Lo, I, that am shut with the seal, have brought forth. O Prophet, rich in the Spirit's revelations, see now that Emmanuel who was hidden to thee of old; and with thy mighty voice rebuke the harlot Sion, who spurned thy words, and would not believe that I should bring forth in my virginity, according to thy testimony.

7. Come to me, O ye wise, O rational heralds of the Spirit, ye prophets who saw hidden things in your trustworthy visions; ye husbandmen, who cast the seed and slept in hope; arise, exult, now ye see the harvest's fruits. Behold in my arms that Stalk of Life that gives bread to the hungering, and satiates the needy. Rejoice with me, because of joys I have received the sheaf.

Hymn VIII.

1. Come, let us call Mary blessed, the poor little Virgin whom the King's Son hath enriched. Great is her blessedness, and her memorial manifold, and her praises all peoples multiply. Mary said, *All generations shall call me blessed*, on account of Him to whom I have given birth. And I too in turn will proclaim her blessed, because she has herself invited me. And to her, O ye wise, must this debt be paid.

2. Truly blessed is she who was chosen to be Mother of the Father of all, and to give of her milk to the Nourisher of all. Blessed be the Redeemer of all, who dwelt in her. Blessed is she who has become to the world a fountain flowing with all good things. From her has arisen the Light of the world. Let all then pronounce her blessed as much as is meet.

* "He willed, and hell received Him in its bosom: He willed, and Mary received Him in her bosom." *Hymn. Azymor.* xvi. n. 4. Lamy, vol. i. p. 611.

† *Ezech.* iii. 12.

3. Blessed is she who conceived, and was given offspring with virginity intact: blessed is she who without knowing the pains of wives has exulted in the fruit of mothers. Unequal is my mouth to tell forth her blessedness. Since that most blessed one is verily in all things admirable, who kept inviolate the seals of chastity, and obtained offspring that took away the dolours of childbirth.

4. Blessed is the Virgin whose beatitudes are so multiplied, that all peoples are enriched by means of her childbirth, and all nations eat of the Fruit of Life that from her has sprung without its coming to fail. Blessed is she who knew not man, and by her Child hath blotted out the malediction of Adam's race.

Hymn IX.

Respons. Glory to the Lord of all who sprung from thy bosom.

1. Blessed art thou, Mary, daughter of the poor, because thou hast become Mother of the Lord of kings; and holily dwelt in thy bosom He, of whose praises the heavens are full. Blessed is thy breast that suckled Him with burning love. Blessed thy mouth which, seized with desire of Him, gave Him fond endearments. Blessed thy arms that embraced Him. A chariot thou art, and didst bear the Fiery One.

2. Blessed art thou, Mary, because thy bosom was a palace of the King, and to thee He turned His steps, who weaves the crown for princes and proffers dignities to rulers. From the tribe of Juda is thy origin, and of the House of David thy lineage. Illustrious is thy race; since, remaining a Virgin, thou art made Mother to the Son of David.

3. Blessed art thou, O Maiden, because thou didst carry the lion's whelp whereof wrote Jacob.* He it was that humbled Himself and sucked thy pure milk wherewith He was nourished, and became a lamb from a virgin sheep, that He might be offered on the altar of the Cross for our salvation. A figure of thee was the tree which gave the ram, whereby Isaac was set free.†

4. Blessed art thou, O blessed one, because through thee was loosed and taken away from women, the malediction of Eve, and through thee was loosed the common debt, sealed and signed with the Serpent's hand-writing for all generations. For thou hast given birth to the Treasure which has bestowed all succours on the world. In thee hath arisen the Light by which the thick shades of darkness and all their power have been scattered, so that they are now no more.

5. Blessed art thou, Mary, because thy Child has appeared on a chariot utterly wonderful. And hence all rational spirits gave to Him benedictions, and the Cherubim, thundering as they moved, praised Him with trembling. Blessed art thou, because thou hast embraced Him as thy Child, loved Him as His Mother, and adored Him as do the Angels.

6. Blessed art thou, Mother most blest, because all generations with loud voice call thee entirely blessed on account of the Infant born of thee. The islands, the tribes, all peoples proclaim thee blessed. Blessed art thou, chaste Virgin, for with thee and in thee dwells heavenly beatitude.

Hymn X.

Respons. Blessed is He who has magnified His Mother's memory here on earth, and in the heavens above.

* *Gen.* xlix. 9.

† See *supra*, Hymn v. 7, *footnote*.

1. Permit me, Lord, with faith to tell Thy generation. *Wonderful, God.** Yea verily Wonderful art Thou: and yet no wondering can reach to Him whom the prophet called Wonderful. Wonderful art Thou and full of miracle, since the whole miracle is wonderful. Wonderful is Thy Conception, Wonderful Thy Nativity, Wonderful art Thou altogether, yea Wonderful and incomprehensible.

2. With Thee will I begin, and confiding in Thy hope, with Thee will I end, O infinite God: beginning with Thy humility will I open my mouth. Do Thou fill it, Lord, from Thy treasures. I am the field, and Thou the husbandman. Graft Thine own voice on the voice of a worthless man, Thou who didst sow Thyself in the Virgin most pure. Virgin-born Thou didst gleam forth from the Father, and wert made of Mary, who without seed bore fruit.

3. Mary, bowing down, brought forth the Giant of ages, even the Giant Most Mighty in the Father's Essence concealed, in Divinity hidden. With great love did the Virgin nurse her Child, caress and kiss Him; whilst He made as though He would spring to her embrace, and looked at her with laughing smiles as He lay a little infant, wrapt in swaddling clothes in the manger. When He began to cry, His Mother would rise to give Him her milk, fold Him in her arms with fond endearments, rock Him on her knees, and He would then be still.

4. Thy father David sung a canticle to Thee before Thou camest, O Only-begotten of God. Of the gold of Saba he spoke in his prophecy. His canticle was verified by the event. For, lo, gold, myrrh, and frankincense were heaped up before Thee, O Child Most Mighty: gold for Thy royal dignity, incense for Thy Divinity, myrrh for Thy Humanity. And blessed is he who shall not be scandalised in Thee.

5. Behold, in Thy Father Thou art, and in Mary, in the chariot of the Cherubim, and in the manger, aye, and in every place. Most verily Thou art in the Father, and most truly in Thy Mother, in the mean manger also, and everywhere, because Thou art Creator, and in all things, because Thou art their Maker. Thou art He who is from the Father, and Thou art He who is from Thy Mother. He Thou art who is One. He Thou art who is come, and who is to come.

6. Woe to him who would curiously pry into Thee, and disputes about Thee, seeking to handle the deep mysteries of Thy divinity! Woe to him who confesses Thee not! Woe to him who loves Thee not! Woe to him who believes not in Thee! Woe to him who thinks that Thou needest aught! But blessed is he who has written that Thou art God. Blessing from Thy Father, blessing from Thy love, blessing from Thy Spirit, be bestowed on him who is full of joy at Thy Birth.

7. The flaming hosts of Michael were filled with commotion by Thee, O Child-God! The cherubim yoked to Thy chariot, and the living creatures† are unable to bear Thee, O Son of the Omnipotent! And lo, the bosom of a Virgin is the object of Thy condescension, and the term Thy humility has willed. Infinite Thou art, and yet Thou wert circumscribed, Thou for whom no limit exists, O Sea of mercies, shut in by no bounds.

8. The sight of Thee gives refreshment, sweet is Thy fragrance, and holy Thy mouth, O Holy God! From Thee flows life on all sides, Thou that art

* *Is.* ix. 6, Admirabilis Deus.

† Ζῶα, Animalia, *Apoc.* iv. 6.

the Bread of life in the House of Bread (Bethlehem), Thou that art Life from the one only Life. Sweet is the odour of Thy breath, and pleasant the savour of Thy childhood. For food art Thou sought, Thou who in Thy pity hast become the Heavenly Food that gives life to the spiritual bird: a Virginal Child, too, Thou art. Blessed is he that is athirst for Thy Blood.

9. Shepherds brought and offered to Thee, O Living Lamb of God, a sucking lamb. Thee, O Lord true Shepherd, with benediction and thanksgiving they adored and praised. They then returned, astounded at the lauds of angels and spirits who gave magnificent glory as they sung: *Glory to God in the highest, and to men good hope.**

10. The Son of the Father, Thou art the Son of Mary, and the One Word of God, born supernaturally from Thy Mother, naturally from Thy Father, extraordinarily from the Jordan: † from the River, from the Mother, and from the Father Thou art the one self-same Child-God. The oracles of wisdom were stored up and hidden in Thee, who wert laid in the manger, and didst suck virginal milk from the daughter of David.

11. The womb bore Thee, the manger sufficed for Thee, Simeon carried Thee, Divine Giant. See, Thou art limited, surrounded, seized, closed about with a body, capable of being handled, Thou whose nature was never circumscribed by limits; see, Thou art enclosed within the limits of a little manger. But who can put limits to Thy Essence? Behold within limits Thou liest, O Infinite One, because the Infinite Son, who is not circumscribed by limits has willed to be circumscribed by limits.

12. Like to Thy Father, like to Thy Mother Thou art: to whom, then, art Thou like? God has not form: without having colour, Thou art like to the Father in virtue, in essence, in nature, in power: like Thou art also to Mary, Thy parent, from whom Thou hast assumed human form. Lo, Thou art like to the Father, and like to the Mother, and Thou art like, too, to Thyself. O Thou who hast assumed the form of a servant, to Thee be glory.

13. How loving Thou art, how humble, how vehement! Thy generation is both known and hidden. Thou castest Thyself to all; on every one who meets Thee Thou smilest; Thou presentest Thy gladsome brow for kisses; Thy lips drop medicine of life, balsam flows from Thy fingers, beautiful are Thine eyes; see, they are turned to Thy Mother who is pressed with hunger for Thy look. All the children of the Church long after Thee most ardently.

14. Thou art fiery, Thou art spiritual, Thou art the Son of the Supreme Being. Incarnate Thou art of David's daughter, of the race of slaves. Bones and flesh, too, Thou hast, O incorporeal One, who hast assumed a body. Most true is it that Thou art not created, Thou who hast brought all creatures into existence. Thou hast created, because Thou hast so willed, and Thou art made what Thou hast loved. Thou art He who now reigns with Thy Father.

15. Seraphim proclaim Thrice-Holy, Cherubim surround, Angels celebrate Thy Divinity; with their bodies they overshadow the manger: Joseph and Mary are standing awe-struck and fearful, as they hear the sound of the Seraphim's trembling wings, and the terrible thunder of their voices. Who

* *Luke* ii. 14.

† "Though Thou art the Son of One alone, yet will I proclaim Thee Son of many. Countless names suffice not for Thee; for Thou art Son of God, Son of a carpenter, Son of David, and Son of Mary." Lamy, vol. iii. p. xix.

shall suffice for Thee? Who shall comprehend Thee? Who shall search Thee out? Who would dare to pry into Thy Nativity?

16. Son of God, thou art come to net the rational sheep; Offspring of the Virgin, Thou art become a Lamb, and the sheep that was lost has run to meet Thee, because it has heard the voice of Thy bleating. O Lamb, that hast brought sanctity, O Suckling who bearest with Thee the Ancient of days, O Shepherd and Lamb, O Priest and Victim; O sucking Lamb, how meek Thou art!

17. Thy Mother exults, Joseph exults, and Thou too dost exult, O Lamb of our Pasch (exultation). Mary exults because she has given Thee birth: and she kisses Thee, the lion's whelp,* because that fox, Herod, the wanton king, at Thy voice is troubled. His reign is over now that Thy reign has begun. Thy kingdom it was he had: for the King Thou art, nay more, the King of kings.

18. Adam Thou didst frame out of dust, and Thy Mother Thou createdst, and Thyself Thou formedst in Thine own mind. For what in Thy human being is natural, came not from Thy Father, because such, Lord, is Thy [human] nature, that its father is not Thy Father. But Thine own will it was that formed Thy Humanity. In Thy birth from the Father, Thou formedst not Thyself, because beginning Thou hadst none. But in Mary Thou didst form Thine own self, since such was Thy will.

19. There stands Mary, Thy Mother, Thy Sister, Thy Spouse, Thy Handmaid: for, bent low, she now has brought Thee forth, and already embraced Thee with love, folded Thee in her arms, kissed Thee, praised Thee, offered Thee thanks, and given Thee of her milk. See, as she nurses Thee, she fondly caresses Thee, lulls Thee, and smiles at Thy infant ways, whilst Thou, joyous and lively, art sucking her milk. Meanwhile bewildered, at a loss what to think, is Thy parent, Thy nurse, Thy creature. Do Thou Thyself, O Son, compose Thy Mother aright.

20. Do Thou, Thy Mother's Master, Thy Mother's God, Thy Mother's Lord, Thy Mother's Junior and yet her Senior be still. Rapt me Thou hast in wonder: for lo, Thy affability o'erwhelms me. But who can look at Thee, and not taste how sweet Thou art? The very taking off Thy swaddling clothes, Thy mere undressing, casts in amazement the beholders, and astounds even the sober-minded. And see Thy tiny hands bound round in swathing-bands, Thy little feet now beating. Ah yes indeed, all-lovable Thou art; and then Thy mouth that lisps about Thy Father.

21. Comely is Thy beauty, and sweet Thy fragrance, Thy mouth as honey, O Infant God. The virtue that goes forth from Thy mouth sends a thrill through the spirits in heaven. Mary stands astounded; at Thy nod all creation trembles; and whilst Thou in Thy goodness art giving nourishment to the world, the milk that Thou hast created Thou Thyself dost suck.

22. I give Thee thanks, O Son of God, for that I am found worthy to hymn the event of Thy Birth. Deign in Thy goodness to pardon my defects, and I will confess to Thee, and bless Thee; because from Thee, and due to Thee is this canticle of praise. On this day of Thy Nativity forgive our offences; in Thy mercy wash away our stains. Let Thy peace, O Lord, reign in our people and in Thy Church. To Thee be praise, O glorious Child, on the day of Thy solemnity.

* *Gen.* xlix. 9.

Hymn XI.

Respons. Blessed is He who made choice of Mary, and hath greatly magnified her memory.

1. The Virgin daughter of David has with inscrutable love invited me to-day to a banquet. Come then let us enjoy ourselves at her table, and make glad with her, confessing that the Offspring she gave birth to is God.

2. The Virgin daughter of David stands amongst the crowds, carrying her Little One. The disputers stand around: one disputes about her, another pries into Him. With the virginal seal she is secure and intact.

3. She carries her Child, and her virginity remains. She is an all-pure maiden, and gives the milk of mothers. Who will ever be able, who shall have power, who will dare, to investigate?

4. She carries her Little One in her bosom, and keeps the marks of virginity. What else can he say who sees her but: *Behold the Wonderful*, as spoke Isaias.*

5. The renowned Isaias called the Child, *God, the Mighty One;* and *the Wonderful*, on account of His wondrous birth: let then no one call Him otherwise than *Wonderful*.

6. He entered in by the ear† and took secretly His dwelling in the womb: but in going forth thence He broke not the virginal seals: as neither in going out of the sepulchre, did He break its seal.

7. Mary carried Him nine months in her womb. Whilst sucking her milk, He was sending down the rain-drops from heaven. At this prodigy let the gainsayers' arrogance come to nought.

8. The bosom of Mary was like to that of wives and mothers: yet she bore fruit without scath to virginity. Keep silence, thou impudent one, be in fear, O disputer, struck with awe at the Maiden.

9. The Prince of Angels called Christ his Lord.‡ No man is the Angels' Prince. But because Christ is God, and Son of God, He is therefore Gabriel's Lord.

10. Who, and whose Son, is He that was born of the Virgin? God He is of true God; God above on high, Man here below. Anathema to him that pries into Him.

11. Sing a canticle to Him whom Mary carried, ye peoples and all ye nations; for He it is who carries heaven. Filled with awe the cherubim bless Him; and Thrice-Holy the seraphim proclaim Him.

12. O Church and Spouse, behold thy Lord hangs on the Cross, His side on the right is open, and thence flow water and blood, as a propitiation for the sons of Adam.

* *Is.* ix. 1. S. Ephrem seems to apply to the Mother what Isaias said of the Son: unless we are to change the text.

† "If Christ was not God, why was He sent by the Father? If, on the other hand, He was not man, what need was there of Mary? If He was not God, how could He enter in by the ear? And if He was not man, how did a womb bring Him to birth? If He was not God, how could He preserve His Mother's virginity in her childbirth? And if He was not man, why went He not forth by the same way that He had entered in? Whereas in fact, the Spirit entered in by the ear, and the flesh went forth from the womb." S. Isaac Antioch., *Opera Omnia*, ed. Bickel. Gissæ, 1873, T. I. p. 60.

‡ *Luke* i. 28. According to the Syriac version the words of Gabriel are: *Hail, full of grace, our Lord is with thee.*

13. Edessa sent legates to Christ the King, saying: "Come hither to me, bring with Thee the saving Cross, that I may adore it: come, to heal me; come, to cure me; come, to afford remedy for the pains wherewith I am sick.*

Hymn XII.

Respons. Glory be to Him who from eternity was born of the Father, and by His beneficence was made an Infant in time.

1. Who would not marvel at Thy most glorious Birth? Conceived in stainless virginity, and born without pains of labour, in the heavens Thou art without mother, and on earth without father. Under every respect utterly wonderful is Thy Birth. For with seals unbroken, and virginity inviolate, the breasts of the Virgin are full of milk, wherewith she nurtures the Nourisher of all.

3. The rock on Mount Horeb gave a type of thee, O Virgin: for it brought forth without being hollowed out, and supplied drink to the Israelites' camps, that were languishing and dying of thirst. Thy shadow it was that reached the rock and made it fruitful: because from Thee have sprung heavenly waters, by the drink whereof the world through grace has slaked its thirst.

4. In a womb of flesh was arranged the nuptial chamber, wherein reposed the heavenly Bridegroom. The virginal guard with vigilance kept the doors. But when the glorious Bridegroom willed to go forth, He left o'ercome with sleep the virgin guard, and so went out, unperceived. Meanwhile the Watches with Angels sang abroad His praise.

5. *All generations shall call me blessed*, says Mary with exultation, because I have become by grace Mother of God; and have brought to birth, with chastity unstained, the Lamb of God and Lord of all, as told me the Angel who brought the news.

Hymn XIII.

Respons. Blessed is thy Child, O Mother altogether wonderful.

1. A Virgin altogether wonderful art thou, who didst bring forth for us the Son of God. Worthily to speak thy purity my mouth doth fail.

2. A treasure stored with all beatitudes, and pouring life to its possessors, hast thou bestowed on us by thy virginity. Who will be able to repay due praises?

3. Of thee is born in lowliness the Most High, who made Himself a little one that men He might exalt, and I thy memory should honour and magnify both here on earth and in the heavens above.

4. To-day with joy let heaven and earth exult, with all therein that love to sing thy glory, and celebrate thy praises.

5. The cherubim of fourfold face unequal are to thee in sanctity. The six-winged seraphim yield to thee in comeliness of beauty.

6. Nor equal are to thee in purity, the legions of heavenly angels who carry with great pomp the beauteous Little One, gone forth from thy bosom.

* The embassy of king Abgar to Christ, and Christ's answer, amongst the archives of the Church of Edessa, are mentioned by Eusebius (H. E. I. 13). Cureton has published the Syriac text of the passage with other documents, relating to it, in his work, *Ancient Syriac documents, relative to the earliest establishment of Christianity in Edessa*. London, 1864. See supra, *Hymn VI. on the Epiphany*, strophe 52, p. 405.

Hymn XIV.

Respons. Blessed is Thy Nativity, O Lord of all, by which the whole world is illumined.

1. The Virgin, her most wonderful, the Angel saw: and rapt in admiration at her, as though from love, he gently blandished her, saying, *Peace to thee, full of grace*, e'en heaven is not more high than thou: the abode of angels quakes before thy Child, and thou dost tranquil bear Him. He with His breath gives life to angels, and since He so hath willed, nourished He is with thine own milk. Thy fingers full of wonder bear the burning coal, and its flame's vehemence is stilled. O Blessed Mother, to whom ever hast thou given birth?

2. The mind mounts upward beyond times and moments to contemplate, O Child, Thy Birth. Intelligence has dared to search Thee out, and is by dazzling angels blinded; fire in the sea is quenched. It saw Thee in Thy hidden Father lost, by living fire surrounded; there it saw the mingled flame and lightning flashes, a dread effulgence to o'erwhelm its boldness; a dense cloud of flames, rays of resplendent light, and great commotion with a voice that cried, "The Son of God may not be searched out."

3. Child, than all times more ancient, give me to speak of Thy Nativity. I know, O Lord, that incomprehensible Thou art, that hid in God Thy generation is, and that by means of Thy Divinity Thou hast Thyself made manifest. Urgent is love to speak; give words to love. A matter difficult it is for me, but ill-prepared, to scan Thee. Give then to love a hymn of praise, that prying not, but suppliantly adoring, it Thee may glorify without vain searching. Being, to reason inaccessible, do Thou to me Thy word reveal, that of Thee I may speak.

4. Lo, intellect, impelled by love, directs the keenness of its vision straight to Him without prying; urgent it is that to it may be given some way whereby it might approach to find Him out, but this the dense angelic choirs will suffer not, nor Gabriel's hosts that gird Him round, nor Michael's serried ranks that stand in fear and trembling, nor the cherubim, most terrible, with faces veiled, nor the dread seraphim shaking their wings, nor, in fine, the throngs of spirits breathing fire. And who would dare to stand amongst them, or seek approach to view the Son of God?

5. Thus love impels the mind. But come, tired of thy miseries, be still, and seek not to transport thyself to where those fiery spirits dwell, whose closed ranks will not allow thee to approach the Hidden One. Come thou and see Mary Him carrying, Joseph embracing Him, He who midst spirits is in His Father hid, has by the Virgin here Himself made manifest to mortals. Hidden He is on high, but visible here below. Let wearied searching, then, keep still: for to the lover here Himself He hath revealed.

Hymn XV.

Respons. In heaven and on earth hast Thou dwelt, O Lord, hidden in the bosom of Thy Father, manifested in the bosom of Mary.

1. A chariot of fire bears the Lord with trembling; weak knees bear Him, and are not burned. Flaming Angels carry Him with fear, whilst David's daughter folds Him in her little bosom. Cherubim bear Him, and quake with fear; Seraphim proclaim Him Thrice-Holy, and are seized with dread, whilst Mary lovingly cherishes Him in her bosom.

2. Mary, the faithful and blessed amongst women, offered virginal milk from her breasts to the Child. O marvel, who could say what sort it is? The Virgin brought Him forth with virginity unscathed. Bowing down she gave birth, and yet is Virgin: rising up she suckled Him, and Virgin still remains. She died, and her virginity is inviolate.

3. The Orient with its stars was a figure of Mary, from whose bosom arose for us the Lord of stars. He by His birth chased darkness from the world, and with His beams illumined far-off peoples, who taking gifts brought them to Him, and offered them in Bethlehem's stable. Then having adored Him, they went back to their own country.

4. To-day let the world resound with praises, and let all with one mouth and tongue sing words of praise and a canticle of glorification. Together let all nations intone the hymn: *Glory to God in the heavens, and on earth peace to all flesh, because a Saviour is born to the world.**

5. To-day let Ezechiel, renowned for his visions, rejoice because his prophecy is in effect fulfilled. In Babylon he saw a closed gate and said: *Sealed up let it be, because by it the Lord will enter in.*† Mary is that closed gate. By it Christ came into the world, but He opened it not. Let disputations be silent.

6. The Mother who gave Him birth is worthy of memorial; the bosom that bore Him is worthy of benediction. Joseph too, by grace is called father of the Son of Truth, whose Father is in all things to be praised. Oh, the Shepherd of all creatures, who was sent to the lost sheep that had strayed, and carried and brought it back to the fold again!

7. Where shall he who seeks Thee, find Thee? Where shall he who loves Thee, see Thee? Shall he seek Thee in the bosom of Thy Father, or at Ephrata in Bethlehem's Manger? But if he seeks Thee in the bosom of Mary—there Thou art hidden, kept under seal. Altogether and every way wonderful is Thy Birth.

Hymn XVI.

Respons. The Memorial of Mary to all generations.

1. The Blessed Virgin heard the Angel's salutation;‡ and on receiving it, she conceived. With the same salutation were the disciples gladdened in the Supper-room. May Thy salutation be a wall of peace to kings and to priests in their cities. Keep the children of the Church by Thy Cross, so that with Hosannas they may praise Thy Name.

2. Blessed art thou, Mary, because in thee dwelt the Holy Ghost, of whom sung David. Blessed art thou who wast worthy to receive from Gabriel the Father's salutation. Blessed art thou who wert made as though a chariot for the Son of God. Thy knees supported Him, thine arms bore Him, thy breasts were as fountains to Him. Thou didst embrace an Infant clad in flames.

3. Blessed art thou, Mary, because the Bush seen by Moses figured thee forth. Blessed art thou, Mary, who wast to thy Babe as though the vei

* *Luke* ii. 14.

† *Ezech.* xliv. 2.

‡ In Syriac, *Peace*, because the Syrians of old, like the Hebrews, saluted one another saying, *Peace to thee*. Thus Christ several times saluted His disciples.

wherewith Moses covered the splendour of his face. Blessed art thou, Mary, because from thee came forth that single Ray which cast the sun in shade. The same Ray it was that irradiated Moses of old on the mountain top, and to-day sends forth its beams to the farthest bounds of earth.

4. Blessed art thou, Mary, because all the prophets in their books depicted thee. Blessed art thou, Mary, because Isaias in his prophecy announced thee: *Behold a Virgin shall conceive, and bring forth a Son, whose name is Emmanuel.** Lo, all the nations cry aloud, "With us is He, who by His will directs all things."

5. Blessed art thou, Mary, because in thy virginity thou art called the new Mother. Blessed art thou, Mary, because thou wert designated under figure of the earth which produced Adam, and thou wert made parent of Adam's Lord. Behold the Word dwelt in thy most pure womb, and made for Himself a form within thy bowels.

6. Blessed art thou, Mary, because thou wert made the most glorious Mother of the Lord of kings. From thee sprung that Fruit, desired and glorious, which is full of all virtues. Blessed art thou—yea wide fame has thy blessedness in cities and congregations—because thou gavest birth to Christ, the world's Saviour, who by His grace has saved His creatures.

7. Whilst I was yet a little child, the priests of the people brought me up in the holy temple, when I became a young girl they espoused me to the just Joseph.† But a man all on fire came to me bringing tidings, and saluted me. On receiving his salutation I conceived, and going away, in the stable of Bethlehem I gave birth to the little Infant, who by His nativity brought joy to the whole world.

Hymn XVII.

Respons. Glory to Thee, O Lord, the heavens and the earth rapt with joy, adore Thee.

1. O Virtue of the Father, who, under the pressure of love, didst dwell in a virginal womb, give me to make words concerning Thy great and incomprehensible generation.

2. O Son most rich, who in love didst will to dwell in the womb of a poor little one, give me voice and speech that with admiring wonder I may speak of Thee.

3. My mouth is too small for me to speak of Thee, and my tongue unequal to show forth Thy mysteries. Voice and speech fail to tell of Thy beauty. Say Thou the word, and I will speak of Thee.

4. O Lord of all, grant me to draw near with trembling to the Archangel's sublimity, when he brought to the Virgin Mother the tidings of Thy coming.

5. O ye wise, come listen, and hear a thing most prodigious. And sing praises to Him who made Himself low that He might give life to Adam dead in his sin.

6. The Father by the nod of His mercy signified to His Son that He should descend to earth in order to save His creature; and commanded the Angel Gabriel to prepare the way for His descent.

* *Is.* vii. 14.

† We have here a striking testimony to the Presentation of Our Lady, to her early life in the precincts of the Temple, and to the traditional account of the choice of S. Joseph as her spouse.

7. In David's daughter appeared His mercies, that she might become Mother of Adam's and the world's Father, whose Name is older than the sun.

8. The incomprehensible Will has gone forth; has called out the Angel from the heavenly orders; and sent him to earth, that he may bring the news to the Virgin most pure.

9. He brought the Epistle,* sealed with the mystery hidden from ages,† wherein were contained the peace that was signified to the Maiden, and good hope to the whole world.

10. The fiery spirit winged his flight from heaven, came to the Virgin; and by his coming filled the needy with riches, brought to her the salutation, and tidings of the Conception that was to awaken the wonder and admiration of all.

11. *The Angel* said to the Virgin: "Peace with thee, Mother of the Lord, blessed art thou, O Maiden, and blessed the Fruit that is in thee."‡

12. *Mary answered:* Who art thou, Lord? and what is this thy speech? Far from me is what thou sayest; and what may be the purport of thy words, I know not.

13. *A.* Most blessed of women, it has pleased the Most High to dwell in thee. Fear not. Grace in thee has inclined itself to pour forth mercies upon the world.

14. *M.* I beg, Lord, terrify me not. Thou bearest coals of fire: burn me not. All-strange to me is what thou sayest, and its meaning I fail to understand.

15. *A.* The Father has revealed to me, and I reveal to thee the secret entered into between Him and His Son, when He sent me, namely, that from thee is the Son to rise upon the world.

16. *M.* Thou art all flame. Strike me not with terror. Thou art girt with burning coals. Cast me not in dread. O thou fiery one, how am I to place faith in thee? All thou sayest is new.

17. *A.* Utterly astounding will appear thy conduct, if by thy answer thou shouldst make of no effect the tidings I bring thee of the Conception of the Most High, who has willed to dwell in thy womb.

18. *M.* I fear, Lord, to assent to thee. For my mother Eve, through assenting to the friendly-speaking serpent, fell from her glory.

19. *A.* He, O daughter, by his promises deceived thy mother Eve. But I deceive thee not. In very truth I am sent by God.

20. *M.* The matter whereof thou speakest is very difficult. Blame me not: because from a virgin a son appears not; nor from her fruit does a virgin become a Goddess.

21. *A.* Hither, as to the place appointed, the Father commanded me to bring thee the salutation and message, namely, that His Son was to spring from thy womb. Against this raise no objection.

22. *M.* Thy presence and thy advent would be agreeable, were it not that

* "The Father had sent an Epistle by an angel, and sent it to the Virgin Mary at Nazareth. For her had He chosen to be Mother of His Only-begotten when He should appear to save the world." From one of S. Ephrem's Hymns, vol. ii. p. 644, *note*.

† *Col.* i. 26, *Eph.* i. 9, 10, iii. 4, 5, 9.

‡ *Luke* i. 28, 42.

my very being is troubled, and I am anxious to know how fruit can be given in a virgin.

23. *A.* The heavenly hosts are troubled at His word. But when He has given the command, they make no more objection. And thou, how dost thou not fear to search into what the Father has willed?

24. *M.* I am troubled, Lord, and full of dread; and fear hinders me from being convinced; especially since very nature would have me hold that virgins give not birth.

25. *A.* The Father's love has willed that in thy virginity thou shouldst bear a Son. It becomes thee therefore to be silent, and believe; since there is no resistance to the Father's Will.

26. *M.* Venerable is thy aspect, dread thy nature, and ardent thy flame; inscrutable the Being of thy Lord. Yet thy assertion is difficult for me to believe.

27. *A.* Good news have I brought thee, whereby I have made known that thou wilt give birth to thy Lord. Maiden, give thanks to Him who has deemed thee worthy to become His Mother, and deigns Himself to be thy Son.

28. *M.* I am but a girl, and unable to contend with a man who is all on fire. The matter whereof thou speakest is hidden from me, and wholly beyond my intelligence.

29. *A.* To-day hope has come to Adam, that the Lord of the universe is in thee so appeased, as to come down in order to loose and deliver him from the curse. Receive my words with thanksgiving.

30. *M.* What thou hast spoken to me to-day has struck me with stupor and astonishment. I fear, Lord, to give the assent, lest guile should be in thy words.

31. *A.* When I was sent to bring to thee these tidings, thou didst hear the salvation that I brought thee. True to His word is my Lord, who thus wills from thee to appear to the world.

32. *M.* All thy words strike me through with wonder. For in the case of a virgin a son is all unknown. And in me is chastity inviolable.

33. *A.* He will come to thee. Fear not. In thy bosom will He dwell. Search no further. O thou, *Full of grace*, celebrate the glory of Him who is pleased to appear in thee.

34. *M.* Lord, *I know not man. . . . How then shall this be done?* . . .

35. *A.* By the Father am I sent to bring the tidings, that He has been impelled by His love to deign that His Son should dwell in thy womb, and the Holy Ghost overshadow thee.

36. *M.* Then, Angel, I resist not. If the Holy Ghost wills to come to me, it is His right to do so. *I am His handmaid. Be it done to me, Lord, according to thy word.*

37. *A.* May thy head be exalted, O Maiden; let thy heart rejoice, O Virgin. A new heaven art thou. Let the earth exult that has found peace through thy Son.

38. *M.* Let my head be exalted, Lord, even as thou hast said, I will confess to His Name with joy. But if thou, who art but His servant, art so beautiful, to whom is He like? Tell me, if thou knowest.

39. *A.* The heavenly choirs cannot behold Him, so dread is He, hidden in His Father's Flame. The hosts of heaven quake with fear before Him.

40. *M.* Now thou hast greatly troubled me. If He is Flame, as thou

sayest, how shall it be that my bosom will take no harm from indwelling Flame?

41. *A.* Thy bosom, filled with the All-Holy, and secretly sealed by the Divinity, affords a place sanctified and greatly beloved. God hath entered that He may be manifest therein.

42. *M.* Show to me, Angel, why it has pleased thy Lord to take up His abode in a poor little maid. Lo, kings' daughters fill the world. Why finds He complacence in poor me?

43. *A.* For Him it were easy to dwell in one that was rich. But He loved thy poverty, that He might consort with the poor, and enrich them when He shall be revealed.

44. *M.* Unfold to me, Lord, if thou knowest, when it is He wills to come to me. Will He appear to me as fire? When will He dwell in me, as thou hast said?

45. *A.* He has willed. He is come, and already is He dwelling in thee. Thou perceivedst Him not, lest thou shouldst suffer any trouble. I dare not look at thee, O full of Fire that consumes not.

46. *M.* I could wish, Lord, still to question thee. Unfold to me also the counsels of my Son now dwelling in me. I know not what I should do, that He suffer no disrespect.

47. *A.* Cry aloud, Holy, Holy, Holy. For the angelic legions cease not from this cry. Nor have we aught else to say of thy Son, save, Holy.

48. *M.* *Holy, Glorious, Blessed be His Name, who hath regarded the humility of His handmaid. Therefore shall all generations in the world call me Blessed.*

49. *A.* Let the heights and the depths applaud Him, let angels and men glorify Him, because the Lord of all, that He might renovate all things, has come down and made His dwelling in the Virgin.

50. *M.* Great and inestimable is His mercy, and by lips unspeakable. For Him whom the heavens on high cannot contain, a womb on earth has sufficed.

51. *A.* Let the heavens and the earth bless Him: the Angel, the Virgin, and all men proclaim Him Holy; because, out of love, He has descended from heaven and become Man.

52. *M.* Let the heavens and angels give thanks to Him. Let the earth rejoice in the Virgin. Let both take part with gladness in giving glory to the Son, their Lord.

53. *A.* Let both together mingled, angels and men, glorify the Son, who has restored peace between them, after their bitter strife and tumult.

54. *M.* Thanks to Thee, O Lord, from all the fiery orders to us invisible. And with universal voices let earth sing praises to Thee.

IN COMMEMORATION OF THE MOTHER OF GOD.

To the tone: the Father had written an Epistle.

Hymn XVIII.

1. Awake, O my harp, thy chords, in praise of Mary the Virgin. Lift up thy voice, and sing the generation utterly marvellous of this Virgin, David's daughter, who hath brought forth Life to the world.

2. The lover with admiration wonders at her; whilst the curious searcher

is suffused with shame and his ear is stopped up, lest he should dare to pry into the Mother who brought forth in virginity inviolate. Here is a matter most sublime, beyond all comprehension. Let not the disputers dare to inquire about her Son.

3. The Child trampled under foot the execrable serpent; broke in pieces the head of the asp; and cured Eve from the poison cast into her by the homicide-dragon, who by his deception had thrust her down to hell.

4. Even as Mount Sinai, I received Thee, and by Thy dread fire was not consumed, because Thou hidedst me from Thy fire that it should not harm me. Thy flame whereat the Seraphim cannot look, consumed me not.*

5. The Second Adam is He called whose Name is from of old, because He dwelt in David's daughter, and was in her, from no earthly father, and, without pains of childbirth, made man. Blessed be His Name.

6. Gabriel, when sent, had prepared a mansion for the Lord. In this mansion the Lord united the nature † of little, mean and humble men, with the Nature of God, that is above all passions.

7. Even Mary asked to be instructed concerning the Conception by the angel who announced it, because she heard spoken things new to her ear. But Gabriel rebuked her lest she should be wearied in attempting to search out her Son.

8. *How shall this be done, since I never know man?* That conception should consist with virginity, is hard. This our nature understands not. Nor was it ever shown to any woman.

9. The Virgin was then supposing the ordinary way of nature. But the Lord in His Nativity marked out His own way. He came into His Mother's womb, her virginity unscathed.

10. When the truth was revealed to her, Mary believed that she conceived. The Son left the old way of birth, and by a new way, unknown both to nature and intelligence, descended into her.

11. Through Mary's Babe was blessed that mother who had been cursed. Benedictions entered in even to her inmost soul, by means of this Babe who slew death and Satan, whereby Adam had been reduced to slavery, and laid prostrate to earth.

12. In Mary's womb became an infant, He who from eternity is equal to the Father. He gave us part in His own greatness, and Himself made acquisition of our weakness. Mortal was He made along with us, that by infusing into us His life, we might die no more.

13. The Adam from above appeared with all things that were of the former Adam; and followed his steps, sin excepted. And for this cause was He called Adam by His herald, Paul.

14. In the formation of the first Adam marriage and childbirth were not needed; because God, taking dust in His fist, alone fashioned Adam; and showed in him virtue and wisdom.

15. In the same way, it is evident, was the Word incarnate of the Virgin Mary: and in the mystery of His Advent no marriage had place. Since, according as He Himself had willed, He assumed a body, was incarnate, and came into the world.

* This strophe seems to be intruded from elsewhere.

† In the Latin rendering, *stipem*, stock.

16. Mary is the garden upon which descended from the Father the rain of benedictions. From that rain she herself sprinkled the face of Adam. Whereupon he returned to life, and arose from the sepulchre—he who had been buried by his foes in hell.

17. From love a great treasure of doctrine disclosed itself before me; and has urged me to discourse of the mystery of David's daughter. Come, hearers, delight yourselves with the doctrine that enriches its lovers.

18. Ever was blessed doctrine solicitous for man's salvation. Now it speaks of the mystery of the Virgin most pure, who brought forth God in flesh. Come ye peoples, be in wonder at its words.

19. Her soul full of admiring wonder and awe, the Virgin would speak about her Infant in a voice gently hushed with spiritual emotions, in little songs breathing love, and sweet canticles, saying:

20. Lo, a Virgin is become a Mother, preserving virginity with its seals unbroken. . . . She is made God's Mother, and is, at the same time, a servant, and the work of His wisdom.

21. The Virgin, who gave birth to the Only-begotten, has nurtured God and Man, has become Mother of the hidden Little One, who of the Father was born perfect, and made an Infant in her womb.

22. The tree of life that grew of old in the midst of paradise gave not fruit to man that could make him live: but, springing up in Mary's bosom, gave its own self to man, and proffered him life.

23. The Word of God let Himself down from the highest, descended to a maiden, and dwelt in her. She conceived and brought Him forth. Sublime is the mystery of the Virgin most pure, too great for all tongues to speak.

24. Eve in Eden became guilty: great was the handwriting of the debt; whereby her posterity in their generations were doomed to death. The Serpent, that perverse scrivener, wrote it out, signed and gave it force with the seal of his fraud.

25. The old dragon saw Eve's offence multiplied by his craft. A maiden it was that loved the deceit of her ravisher; she complied with the devil, and cast man down from his high degree.

26. Eve it was that was found guilty of sin. But for Mary was the debt reserved, that so the daughter might pay her mother's debts, and tear up the handwriting that had transmitted her groans to all generations.

27. Mary carried Fire in her hands and embraced Flame with her arms. To the Flame she offered her breasts to suck, and to the Nourisher of all she gave of her milk. Who will be able to discourse of her?

28. Men of earth multiplied maledictions, and thorns to cumber the ground, and brought into the world the ravager, Death. But the Son of Mary filled the whole earth with life and peace.

29. Men of earth brought diseases and sorrows into the world and opened its gate to Death, that he might enter in and tread it down. But the Son of Mary bore in His own person the sorrows of the world, that He might save it.

30. Since Mary was the Virgin inviolate—prefigured by Eden's blest region, ere its lands were torn by furrows—there blossomed from her bosom the Tree of Life, which by its taste, that is, by its mercy, gives life to souls.

31. Seek not, poor wight, in thine own thoughts the explanation of this marvel; nor idly pursue here the way of nature; since the Son, by a way to nature hidden, entered and dwelt in the closed womb.

32. Mary did not so conceive as to apprehend by natural sense her Infant's ingress. For even to the womb was He Fire and Spirit. In His Mother's womb He was made Man, still remaining perfect God.

40. Mary is the vine that appeared on the blessed stem of David. Her shoots produced the cluster full of life-giving Blood.* Adam drank of that wine, and, brought back to life, returned to Eden.

41. Mary was prefigured by the fair heifer in blessed Abraham's herds.† In perfect virginity she brought forth God, who in His love became Man that He might save us.

44. Hear the benedictions given to Him in the Church by the Cherubim, and the blandishments of the Virgin Mother. In the chariot appears His vehement Majesty, in Mary His love. The Cherubim bless Him with trembling. The Maiden, because she is His Mother, loves.

45. Let the word of life be sent by Thy Majesty to the dwelling-place of the dead, and say to Eve lying in the sepulchre: "Thy daughter, with virginity intact, has brought forth the Child who will pay the debt."

50. Two mothers appeared, who brought forth children very unlike. The one gave birth to a man who branded her with malediction: and Mary gave birth to God, who fills the world with benediction.

51. Blessed art thou, Mary, daughter of David; and blessed is the Fruit which thou hast given us. Blessed the Father who sent His Son for our salvation, and blessed the Spirit Paraclete who has taught us her mystery. Blessed be His Name.

Hymn XIX.

1. With wonder have I contemplated Mary suckling the Nourisher of the tribes, who is become an Infant. In a Maiden's womb dwelt He who fills the world.

2. A daughter of the poor has become Mother of the Most Rich who is mastered by love. He is Fire in the Virgin's bosom. And the Virgin is not consumed by its flame.

3. A Burning Coal has embraced Mary. She carries it and suffers no hurt. A Flame has clothed itself with a body; and its accustomed place is in Mary's hands.

4. A great Sun has become little, and hid itself in a bright cloud. A young maiden has become Mother of Him who is the Father of man and of the world.

5. As she nursed the Child, she caressed Him, fondled and petted Him with coaxing words; and then adored Him, saying: "Bid me, my Master, embrace Thee."

6. Since my Son Thou art, with my nursery-rhymes ‡ will I soothe Thee. And, for all that I am Thy Mother, I shall honour Thee. My Son, to whom I

* "O happy place . . . wherein (that is, in the Cœnacle) by that blessed Hand the Bread was broken. In thee the grape that sprung from Mary, was pressed in the Chalice of salvation." S. Ephrem, *Hymn III. On the Crucifixion*, Lamy, vol. i. p. 659.

† *Gen.* xviii. 7, 8.

‡ The Syriac word here denotes little songs or lullabies, that nurses and mothers sing to their infants as they carry them in their bosom. It denotes also those caresses and loving words that mothers are wont to use to their little ones.

have given birth, older than me Thou art. My Lord, though I carried Thee, it is Thou that upholdest me.

7. My mind is disturbed through fear of Thee. Do Thou collect my scattered senses, that I may praise Thee. I am astonished at Thee, how silent Thou art, whilst voices of thunder are hidden in Thee.

8. An infant from me art Thou sprung: and as a Giant Thou waxest strong. *Wonderful* art Thou, as Isaias called Thee, when he prophesied concerning Thee.*

9. Lo, whole Thou art with me, and whole art Thou hidden in Thy Father. All the heights of heaven are full of Thy Majesty, and yet my bosom is not too straitened for Thee.

10. Thy dwelling is in me, and at the same time in the heavens. With the heavens will I praise Thee. The habitants of heaven marvel at me, and proclaim me most blessed.

11. Let heaven hold me in its embraces; for above it am I honoured. For heaven, in truth, was not Thy Mother, but Thou madest it Thy throne.

12. How much more honourable and venerable is the King's Mother than His throne. I will give Thee thanks, O Lord, because Thou hast willed me to be Thy Mother. In gentle hymns will I celebrate Thy praise.

13. O Giant who upholdest the earth, and hast willed that it should carry Thee, to Thee be praise. O Rich One, who hast become the Son of a poor man's daughter, to Thee be glory.

14. O Thou than all more ancient, who hast descended to me, and become an infant, to Thee is my *Magnificat*. Thou sittest upon my knees, and upon Thee all things hang, the highest and the lowest, even the whole universe.

15. Thou seizest hold of my breasts, and art ruling the earth, the seas, and all things that are therein. Lo, Thy chariot is in the heavens, and I bear Thee still abiding with me.

16. Whilst Thou art with me, all the choirs of angels are adoring Thee. Whilst Thou art held fast in the embrace of my arms, Thou art being borne by the Cherubim.

17. The high heavens are full of Thy Majesty. The bosom of a daughter of earth carries Thee. Amongst celestials Thou dwellest in fire, and terrestrials Thou burnest not.

18. Seraphim proclaim Thee Thrice-Holy. How, Lord, should I bless Thee. The Cherubim praise Thee with trembling; and Thou art honoured by my canticles.

19. Let Eve, our first mother, now hear, and come to me. Let her lift up her head that was bent low under the garden's shame.

20. Let her uncover her face, and give Thee thanks, because Thou hast taken away her confusion. Let her hear the voice of perfect peace, because her daughter has paid her debt.

21. The serpent, her seducer, has been crushed by Thee, the Shoot that is sprung from my bosom. By Thee the Cherubim and the sword have been taken away, that Adam might return to the paradise whence he was driven out.

22. Let Eve and Adam turn for refuge to Thee, and pluck from me of the fruit of life. Through Thee may their jaws be sweetened, which the forbidden fruit had embittered.

* *Is.* ix. 6.

23. Through Thee let the banished slaves re-enter, and receive once more the blessings whereof they were spoiled. Be Thou Thyself to them a garment of glory to cover their nakedness.*

24. Show Thyself in hell where they lie. Drive away thence the darkness. Thou aged Child, my Son, in Thee be blessed all children.

25. Through Thee may those detained in hell, go forth. Through Thee may its very darkness be illumined. Through Thee, Lord, may the poor be enriched: through Thee the needy be filled with abundance.

26. Through Thee may the hungry be satiated, the dead at Thy voice rise again to life. Through Thee may the heavens and the earth resound with voices of praise. Blessed be the Lord of all who sent Thee.

ON THE AGED SIMEON.

Hymn XX.

Respons. Blessed be Christ, whom Simeon with love carried in his arms.

1. The Virgin most pure has invited me to-day to speak of her. Come you young people who are thinking of getting married,† and enjoy the banquet that the Virgin has prepared for her guests.

2. From the Mother, to Christ most pleasing, has beamed a Ray that has illumined the world. After falling gently into her, it went forth from her and saved creation. By His Nativity it chased away shadows, and by its Epiphany it scattered the darkness.

3. Mary bore the Infant who by His wisdom begat Adam. With her milk was He nourished, in her bosom cherished, in her arms carried, even He who upholds the world by His nod.

4. The Virgin received His revelation, when He went forth to visit the world. Laying aside the chariot of living creatures‡ endowed with reason, He willed to be borne by the Virgin. Who shall be able to speak of her worthily?

5. The Virgin took Him to the Temple, that with oblations He might in person visit the House of His Father, and there offer victims and fulfil the Law; and thus be made in everything like to the children amongst whom He was mingled.

6. With His Father was He on Mount Sinai giving the Law to the people, and receiving gifts and prayers. But here a Maiden bears Him, and offers for Him oblations.

7. From the Levites He received victims, and oblations from all the priests. But now He who received sacrifices, Himself proffers petitions and young pigeons, and fine flour, and offers them for purification§ at the altar.

8. From Noe He received oblations, to Abraham He appeared in sacrifice, to Isaac in holocaust, and to Jacob in the ladder.|| Out of His love He was

* "Lo, king David in Bethlehem was vested in purple; whilst David's Lord, and at the same time his Son, wrapped and hid His glory in rags; and gave His rags for a garment of glory to the children of Adam." S. Ephr., Lamy, vol. iii. p. xviii.

† Juvenes nuptiarum.

‡ Animalium, *Apoc.* iv. 6.

§ Several of the Fathers read (*Luke* ii. 22) *τοῦ καθαρισμοῦ αὐτῶν*, in place of *αὐτῆς*.

|| *Gen.* viii. 20-22; xv.; xxii.; xxviii. 12.

propitious to those of old: and oblation made to Him by those of after-time was accepted.

9. The firstlings of Abel He received; and Cain, as displeasing to Him He rejected. For a figure of Him the great Melchisedech fulfilled his priesthood, offering tithes and flour of wheat. But Joseph brought Him to the temple.

10. To Abraham He showed His day. He appeared in the tree and the ram.* To Eleazar He gave a vestment, and covenant.† And now with His parents He placed on the altar the offerings of purification.

11. Simeon, bowed down by great old age, on seeing the prodigy, was all on fire with love. Taking the Infant into his arms, full of wonder he adored, and suppliantly besought Him in these words: *Now, Lord, since I have seen Thee, let me go to my rest.*

12. By an impulse of the Spirit, Simeon was waiting for Christ in the temple. In clear vision he beheld his Lord. When he saw the Child, the old man, burning with love, thus earnestly entreated Him.

13. The Child, given to light by the Virgin, had attached him to life by a thread—even by this promise made to him now long ago: "Until thou wilt see Me an Infant, thou shalt not depart from the world."

14. Generations and years passed by, whilst the promise remained but in words. Attached thereby, the old man went on expecting. And now when the day of long-desired manifestation came, he humbly besought that he might be dismissed from life.

15. Lo, mine eyes see Thy Merciful One. According to the pact entered into by Thee, dismiss me now, O Lord. Thou hast preserved me, and hast honoured me with old age; let me go from life, because I have seen Thee: since for this it was I continued in life, that I might welcome Thee.

16. Let me depart, Lord, that I may repose in the dust, and announce to all the deceased, that He is come who sets captives free, [and say]: The Lord has sent news to you, ye departed ones, that He is coming hither, who raises all again to life.

17. Let me depart, O Son of Life, Thou who hast preserved and left me alive, that in this world I might behold Thee. I have now seen Thy revelation, and in seeing Thee am exalted. I will now go and rest amongst the dead, that to all I may bear the tidings of Thy arrival.

31. Mary heard the prayer that the old man poured forth under the influence of the Spirit. She exulted, and going up to him said: "Speak, venerable old man, sweet as honey are thy words.

32. "Lift up thy voice, thou aged one, that all mothers may hear; and thou by thy prayer mayest bear witness to my virginity, and that with stainless purity was born He, the Good, to save the world.

33. "Lift up thy voice, most gentle one, and constrain the chords of thy harp to make melody. And by thy sweet song console my sadness: because the children of mine own people insult me. By thy canticle bring to silence those who wish me evil."

35. How sweet was the colloquy of the young Maiden and the venerable Old man—by their words bearing testimony to things all new. They knew well who that Little One was, and Whose Son He was; and were telling of His generation full of mercy.

* See *supra*, p. 413. † *Numb.* xx. 26-28, xxv. 11-13.

36. The field of benediction gave the Sheaf of all joys, for its produce and fruit, without husbandry. Simeon carries in his arms benedictions, and presents them to the world.

37. Both one and the other glory in that virginal Fruit: the Maid who gave Him birth, and the Old man who bounded forth to meet Him. Heaven and earth rejoiced in the Mediator who gave peace to the world.

38. The temple and sanctuary rejoice in this Lord of priests, who both offered oblations and received prayers. Along with Joseph He carried victims, and with His hyssop purified the world.

39. Simeon carried the cluster of life from the virginal vine. In his arms he brought Him with benedictions to the house of propitiation; and the whole holy house rejoiced in that Little One who was sent by the Father.

40. The Virgin exulted because she had given Him birth; and the Old man because by His manifestation, he was allowed to depart from life. The altar, because the Little One made His visit with oblations, desired Him. Heaven and earth with all things therein glorify Him, because through His Nativity they are o'erwhelmed with joy.

HYMN ON THE TABLES OF THE LAW.*

12. The Supreme Cause, brethren, called into existence the Law. It was conceived in the bosom of a sanctified table, which was like to the daughter of man, the glorious Virgin.

13. The one a man prepared, the other a man begot. Moses was lover of the one, Joseph spouse of the other. Moses carried the one, Joseph honoured the other.

14. The power (virtus)† of the Law clothed itself with a body of stone, descended, and by its discipline healed souls, restrained heathenism, and took pity upon the world's inhabitants.

15. Since the cause, for which the tables were broken, was sin, the power of the Law mystically put them off, and put on new tables, that in them He might show forth figures.

16. Already the types are crowding thick; the figures are hasting to present themselves; they struggle in my mind, as though in conflict, which may first have the victory.

17. The broken tables give in figure Eve's story. As the Maker built up a rib, shaped and gave it form, so did the Creator carve a table, prepare, and write on it.

19. See again, under a different respect, another figure. The first tables offered types, whereby Our Lord revealed Himself to those of old.

20. The Lord divested Himself of the figures. And coming down, put on another body wherein He remained. And as the Law ministered before His Father, so the Son ministers to the Father.

21. Hear one more type in another way expressed. The Law, in place of the former tables, put on new ones, that hereby might be signified the two Synagogues:

* Hymn xvii., Lamy, vol. ii. pp. 735-742.

† S. Ephrem evidently alludes to the words at the Annunciation: *Virtus Altissimi*, etc.

22. The synagogue, namely, that existed before the time of the Messias—this, after continuing for a short time, was rejected, and could never again return to its house; because Christ would not put off the Church which He had now put on.

25. . . . As the Law, having suffered much on account of sin, put off the stones, and then put them on again,*

26. So Our Lord put on a body, suffered for sins, put on once more a body, and rose again.

HYMNS ON CHRIST'S RESURRECTION.

Hymn XVIII.

2. He shed forth dew and living rain upon Mary *the thirsty ground.* . . .†

6. As a river He flowed forth from on high. From Mary He sprung forth as a root. From the Word He came down as fruit. He ascended to heaven as the first-fruits. Blessed be His Will.

7. The Word of the Father came forth from His Bosom, and in another bosom He put on a body. From a Bosom He came forth to a bosom. These pure Bosoms were filled with Him. Blessed is He who dwells in us.

8. From on high He came down as Lord. And from the womb He went forth as a slave. In hell death bent its knees before Him. And in His resurrection life adored Him.

9. Mary bore Him as Infant; the priest bore Him as an oblation; the Cross bore Him as slain; the heavens bore Him as God. Glory to His Father.‡

Hymn XXI.

10. By Thee, Lord, has the month Nisan become tranquil. In it the Most High poured forth thunders in our ears. In Nisan the Lord of thunder in mercy tempered His heat, and coming down dwelt in the bosom of Mary. In Nisan again He waxed strong, and bursting the bosom of hell, ascended; and once more in Nisan uttered His voice and made fully convinced them that had heard of His resurrection and failed in faith.§

ON THE ANNUNCIATION OF THE MOTHER OF GOD.‖

Hymn I.

Respons. Blessed the mouth that brought Mary the tidings.

1. The Father had written an Epistle by the hand of the Angel, and sent it to Nazareth to the Virgin Mary—whom He chose, and in whom He was well pleased—that she should become Mother of His Only-begotten, who was coming down to save the world.

2. From among the burning legions, from the myriads standing before God, from the fiery choirs, from the flaming ranks, Gabriel was sent to the Virgin to announce to her the Conception.

* Allusion is here made to the breaking and renewal of the Tables of the Law. *Exod.* xxxii. 19, xxxiv. 1, 4.

† *Is.* liii. 2. ‡ Lamy, vol. ii. pp. 741-750. § *Ib.* p. 771.

‖ This and the two following Hymns are Nos. iii., iv., and v., *In Instauratione Ecclesiæ,* Lamy, vol. iii. pp. 969-990.

3. God signified the mandate to Gabriel, who, stirred with great excitement, flew on his mission, bearing with him the Epistle full of news that should bring peace to the children of wrath, for that God was now willing to reconcile the world to Himself.

4. The legate instructed in the mystery, winged his downward flight, and came to Nazareth. When he saw the Maiden, he blessed her and adored; and presented to her the heaven-sent Epistle of peace.

5. Peace be with thee, daughter of man, because chosen art thou to be the dwelling-place for the Lord of Majesty, who is coming down to visit the depths of earth, and lead man back once more to paradise.

6. *Peace to thee, full of grace*, palace of the Most High, because in thee dwells the King, in thee the Light arises, from thee goes forth the Giant who saves the world.

7. The Maiden heard the salutation brought her by the man of fire, and her senses were troubled; and, anxious and astonied in mind, secretly within herself she said:

8. This man of fire, whence is he? This spirit wherefore comes he to me? Who and whence is he? and who is his Lord, that he should say to me: *The Lord is with thee*, and has troubled, and caused me to tremble?

9. The Angel said to the Maiden: *Fear not, Mary*, peace be with thee, for thou shalt conceive and bring forth a prodigy; and in thy bosom shall arise the Sun, that shall scatter the world's darkness.

10. Mary said to the Angel: Explain to me thy word, thou man of fire: thy face is beautiful, thy garments are flames, thy mouth rolls forth fire. Who can speak with thee?

11. Thy speech sublime, from whence comes it? Even as we ourselves speak, dost thou speak with us; yet thy aspect sublime is not from earth; if there be a people of fiery ones, from it thou art, O man tremendous.

12. Unfold to me, son of flame, the thing whereof thou speakest; for thou announcest to me offspring, and *I know not man*. Full of dread is this thy business, even as thyself, thy countenance, thy voice, thy word.

13. How shall she conceive who knows not man? How shall a Virgin bring forth? Who ever saw the like? Explain to me the things that thou hast uttered, how they can be.

14. The Angel made answer: The Holy Ghost will come upon thee, and will sanctify thy womb, and the Power of the Most High will descend upon thee and dwell in thee, and there shall arise from thy bosom the Rich One, who will redeem the debts of the world.

Hymn II.

1. Adam, through the suasion of the serpent, made himself a debtor to the Divine justice, and his sin's penalty was transmitted to all generations. An Angel and a Maiden arranged together, they spoke, they heard, and paid the debt.

2. The Serpent stirred up strife between Adam and God in the garden: the slave was laid prostrate, but survived his ruin. His merciful Lord was pleased to reconcile the son of wrath, and to lift him up.

3. God appointed as intercessors the Angel and the Maiden, that by their mutual words they might settle the difference, so that reconciliation should

be made between those on high and those here below, and the handwriting of the debts be torn up.

4. God, as He had in eternal counsel planned, willed to make peace, pardon the crime, be reconciled with banished man, and in His mercy bring him back to Eden.

5. The mystery was intrusted to two, to one on either side: on the part of those on high, to a single Angel, and on the part of those below to a single Virgin, that they should treat together of the matter, and bring about the reconciliation.

6. The Angel descended from on high, and the Virgin had speech with him. The preliminaries of the reconciliation were settled, and a covenant of peace was made that the banished should return to the garden of Eden.

7. Mary rising, received the legate sent from on high, and listened to his words, and herself spoke with him. Through means of the Angel a grant of pardon was made to the tribes and peoples.

8. From those here below no man was appointed to discharge the debt, but out of women one young maiden, who heard and spoke, set herself to arrange the new affair, and became illustrious in the world.

9. Instead of the Serpent arose Gabriel, and instead of Eve the Virgin Mary. In the first action man had not spoken, and therefore man was not set to pay the debt.

10. Eve became a debtor to God: she it was who gave ear to the Serpent's counsel: child of one day, she contemned the commandment, and therefore through a young Maiden was salvation sent to the world.

11. Gabriel by his words undid the speech that the execrable homicide had held with the virgin Eve: Eve had written the handwriting of debt, and the Virgin paid the debt.

12. The middle wall of wrath, which the cursed Serpent had built up in the garden, Gabriel, coming down to earth, o'erthrew, because the legate of peace was sent to bring peace to the world.

13. Midway stood Gabriel betwixt the Father's mystery and the Virgin Mary. Between one from those on high, and one (unam) from those here below, the covenant of peace was made, whereby were united those on earth, and those in heaven.

14. The daughter full of grace stood up in battle for her mother: Eve had fallen, Mary raised her up; and to the exiles was given hope of their reconciliation and return to Eden.

15. The woes that had arisen have been changed to joys that have come upon the whole world: the evil times have passed away, good days have taken their place, because riches have descended from on high for payment of the world's debts.

16. God has sent hope of salvation that He might thereby give rest to the world, deliver man from this earth of thorns, and take therefrom its miseries. Blessed is He who has been born, and saved the world.

Hymn III.

1. Eve wrote in Eden the great handwriting of debt whereby her posterity should pass on death to all generations; the Serpent signed the fatal book, sealed and secured it with the signet of fraud

2. That old dragon increased by his counsel the debt, for the sex that

loved the mishap that had been brought upon it by the captor, had submitted to the dragon, and drawn Adam forth from the garden.

3. Eve brought on the sin, and the debt was reserved for the Virgin Mary, that she might pay the debts of her mother, and tear up the handwriting under which were groaning all generations.

4. The Serpent, so bitter to our thoughts, breathed into the ears of too facile Eve the poison that has found its way unto all generations, and has been killing the nations, until from Mary went forth the Child that slew the Serpent.

5. The Word of the Father came down from on high into the ear, whereby evil had entered in, lay in wait for the heel of the Serpent, followed in his track, and with His breath washed away the dragon's venom from the ear of the (Virgin) most pure.

6. Whilst out of the ear went forth the deadly serpent's hissing, that so by death's gate might enter in life, and in place of sin grace might abound and reign in its stead.

7. The Father sent Gabriel, true legate of the Word, to announce to the Virgin a peace that should give life to all, and do away with that bitter strife which the cursed Serpent had stirred up in the garden.

8. Winging his downward flight the Angel came to Mary, adored her, and brought her the tidings. Then with joy letting fall gently into her ears his salutation in few words, he drew forth the Epistle sent by God concerning His Son and gave it to her.

9. By the Angel who had been sent was published God's secret mystery; what things had been hidden, were told in the new Gospel, by the mouth of the fiery one, by the tongue of the flaming one.

10. That prince of all angels gave the peace to the maiden, whereby the Father reconciled to Himself Adam's progeny, and sent His beloved Son, that He might appear as man from her womb.

11. Peace with thee, daughter of men, because thou hast been chosen by God for spouse, that, still preserving thy virginity, thou mayest be Mother of His Beloved One, and bring forth the Ancient of days who will raise up again the ruins of the world.

12. *Peace to thee, full of grace, the Lord is with thee, blessed art thou amongst women.* In thee dwells the King and Lord of angels, and from thee shall arise the Saviour of creatures, and of all nations.

13. Mary said: How without man shall generation be given? A child thou announcest to me, show me his father: a virgin intact I am, nor ever know I man.

14. The field that ne'er was sown how shall it see its produce? To me thou announcest fruit. Who is the husbandman? How without seed may I see the yield of fruit?

15. The Angel answered: Be silent, Mary. Thy husbandman needs no seed: Himself coming down will sow Himself in thy womb, from thee will He spring up as the herb, and will satiate the world's hunger.

16. The great book of creation instructs thee how thou wilt bring forth; as Adam, spouseless, begat Eve, so from thee in perfect virginity, will the Saviour go forth into the world.

17. The Holy Ghost is with thee. He it is who will foster and sanctify thy womb, and the power of the Most High will come down to overshadow

thee, and from thee shall go forth the Infant who will crush the Serpent's head.

18. Comely was Gabriel, standing between the Father and the world: he undid the old Serpent's words, and revealed the mystery of truth in place of the fraud wherewith the Serpent had deceived the woman.

19. The Maiden said to the Angel, *Behold here I am, the handmaid of the Lord*, the Creator can dwell in His creature, and fitting is it that the Workman according to His mercy should visit the work of His hands.

20. The Serpent and Eve dug a grave and thrust the guilty Adam down into hell: but Gabriel came and spoke with Mary, and thereupon was laid open the mystery whereby all the dead are again raised up.

21. Adam's virgin entertained the Liar, by whom she was deceived; most perversely she hearkened to him, foolishly believed, and made Adam naked through the garden's bitter fruit.

22. Then arose Mary, the daughter of David, who obtained peace from the Angel, wove a garment of glory, gave her vestment to cover the nakedness of Adam; whilst the Spouse in His beauty stood by in His bridechamber.

23. Two virgins there were, but of these two very different was the conduct: the one laid prostrate her husband, the other uplifted her father. Through Eve man found his grave, through Mary he was called to heaven.

24. Two legates were sent into the world, to Eve, and to Mary: Satan and the Angel, the Serpent and Gabriel, and in the message of these two were found death and life.

25. The garden's wise Planter planted two trees in Eden: on the one He hung death, in the other He hid life; and brought Adam into conflict, that from the contest he might bear away the crown.

26. He imposed on him the law not to eat of the fruit of knowledge that was pleasurable to him, for that in it lurked death: the Serpent and Eve, by taking counsel together, drew the man into sin.

27. On the branch of the Virgin Mary God, coming down from on high, hung the Fruit of which in Eden they had not tasted; from Mary they plucked it, because the Fruit that gives strength to its eaters, out of love descended upon them.

28. The tree, left abandoned in Eden by those who ate of it, with love began to burn. To confound the Serpent who had spoiled them, in its zeal it followed the eaters, that they might eat thereof in their own place.

29. Concupiscence and pride were lurking in the tree of knowledge: the Virgin conceived fruit without concupiscence, that the deadly concupiscence of the human race might be for ever done away.

30. God's Eden is Mary; in her is no tree of knowledge, no Serpent that harms, no Eve that kills, but from her springs the Tree of Life that restores the exiles to Eden.*

31. The Tree of Life, which the Cherub and flaming sword are keeping, lo, now has its place in the Virgin most pure, whom Joseph is guarding. The Jews with reproaches persecute the Maiden, supposing, as they do, Joseph to be father of this Tree.

32. The guard has laid aside his sword, because the Fruit that he guarded has been sent from on high to earth for the fallen. Mortals ate of it and thereby acquired life. Blessed is the Fruit that Mary brought forth.

* See *Epistle to Diognetus* quoted *supra*, p. 47.

CHAPTER XII.

HYMNS AND POEMS.

CARMEN ADVERSUS MARCIONEM.*

* * * * * *

"Et quia terribilis puteo demersus iniquo
Vir cecidit, suasit virgo subducta dracone,
Consilio placuit, tegmen cœleste reliquit,
Arguit hoc lignum nudos; mors atra coegit—
Ex eadem massa simili ratione refecta,
Jam renovata, redit flos carnis, et hospita pacis,
Virgine desponsa caro, non ex semine nata,
Artifici conjuncta suo, sine debito mortis.
Angelus hæc mandata Patris per sidera defert
Lucida, ut angelica credantur nuntia fama,
Virginis ut Virgo carnis caro debita solvat.
Talibus ingressus sequitur vestigia mortis
Parvulus immanis, senior puer, et juvenis vir.
Post ubi justa viri completa est roboris ætas,
Paulatim solitus socias deperdere vitas,
In fœdas etiam rugas et inertia membra
Mutari specie, vacuatis sanguine venis,
Constitit; haud habitum passus veterascere carnis,
Quare manum extendit temere contingere lignum,
Hac eadem redeunte die, volventibus annis,
In stadio ligni, fortis congressus Athleta,
Extenditque manum, pœnam et pro laude secutus,
Devicit mortem, quia mortem sponte reliquit;
Exuit exuvias carnis, et debita mortis,
Serpentis spolium, devicto principe mundi,
Affixit ligno, refugarum immane tropæum.
In cujus signum Moses suspenderat anguem,

* Lib. ii., *De Concordia Veteris et Novæ Legis*, vv. 145-84. Int. Opp. Tertull. The author of the Hymn is unknown. He wrote most probably in the third century.

HYMN AGAINST MARCION.

"And because one direful man
Down-sunk in pit iniquitous did fall,
By dragon-vanquished virgin's suasion led;
Because he pleased her wittingly; * because
He left his heavenly covering † behind;
Because dark death coerced them: in like wise
Out of the self-same mass re-made, returns
Renewèd now—the flower of flesh, and host
Of peace—a flesh from espoused Virgin born,
Not of man's seed, conjoinèd to its own
Artificer, without the debt of death.

These mandates of the Father through bright stars
An Angel carries down, that angel-fame
The tidings may accredit; telling how
'A virgin's debts a Virgin, flesh's flesh,
Should pay.'

Thus introduced, the Giant-Babe,
The Elder-Boy, the Stripling-Man, pursues
Death's trail. Thereafter, when completed was
The ripe age of man's strength, when man is wont
To see the lives that were his fellows drop
By slow degrees away, and to be changed
In mien to wrinkles foul and limbs inert,
While blood forsakes his veins, His course He stayed,
And suffered not His fleshly garb to age.

Upon what day or in what place did fall
Most famous Adam, or outstretched his hand
Rashly to touch the tree, on that same day,
Returning as the years revolve, within
The stadium of the tree the brave Athlete,
'Countering, outstretched His hands, and, penalty
For praise pursuing,‡ wholly vanquished death,
Because He left death of His own accord
Behind, disrobing Him of fleshly slough,
And of death's dues; and to the tree affixed
The serpent's spoils§—the world's prince vanquished quite—
Grand trophy of the renegades: for sign

* Consilio. Compare 1 *Tim.* ii. 14. "Adam was *not* seduced."
† The robe of original justice and grace.
‡ *Heb.* xii. 2. § *Col.* ii. 14.

Ut quotquot fuerant multis serpentibus icti,
Aspicerent ipsum fictum fixumque draconem.
Post ubi secretas inferni venit ad undas,
Atque suum victor captivum luce retexit,
Adstanti justumque Patris virtute peregit,
Sponte suum corpus quod liquerat Ipse recepit.
Causa hæc mortis erat, eadem via facta salutis :
Nuntius ille doli, sed pacis nuntius iste :
Sponsa virum necuit, genuit sed Sponsa Leonem :
Virgo viro nocuit, sed Vir de Virgine vicit.
Cujus in exemplum, sopito corpore somno,
Sumitur ex latere mulier—quæ costa mariti ;
Quam carnem de carne sua, deque ossibus ossa
Evigilans dixit, præsaga mente locutus.
Mira fides, merito Paulus, certissimus auctor,
Christum de cœlis Adam docet esse secundum."

* * * * * *

SEDULIUS.

" Expulerat primogenitum sævissimus anguis
Florigera de sede virum, blandique soporis
Illecebris lethum misero potarat amarum.
Nec solus meritum præsumptor senserat iram,
Mortali sub lege jacens ; sed prorsus ab ipso
Humanum simul omne genus. Heu, noxia conjux !
Noxia tu conjux magis, an draco perfidus ille ?
Perfidus ille draco, sed tu quoque noxia conjux.
Proh dolor ! æterni fuerant duo. Crescere postquam
Cœpit origo, perit, clademque a semine sumpsit.

* * * * * *

Nec reducem spes ferret opem, primique sepulchrum

Whereof had Moses hung the snake, that all,
Who had by many serpents stricken been,
Might gaze upon the dragon's self and see
Him vanquished and transfixed.
When afterwards,
He reached the infernal region's secret waves,
And as a victor, by the light which aye
Attended Him, revealed His captive thrall,
And by His virtue thoroughly fulfilled
The Father's bidding, He Himself retook
The body which, spontaneous, He had left.
This was the cause of death: this same was made
Salvation's path. A messenger of guile
The former was; the latter messenger
Of peace. A spouse her man did slay; a Spouse
Did bear a Lion.* Hurtful to her man
A virgin proved; a Man from Virgin born
Proved victor. For a type whereof, while sleep
His body wrapped, out of his side is ta'en
A woman, who is her lord's rib; whom he,
Awaking, called 'flesh from his flesh, and bones
From his own bones;' with a presaging mind
Speaking. Faith wondrous! Paul deservedly
(Most certain author) teaches Christ to be
The Second Adam from the heavens. . . ." †

SEDULIUS.

"The cruel serpent had primeval man
From flowering Eden driven, and made him drink—
Lulled by soft charms, poor wight—of bitter death.
Nor he, transgressor, had alone to bear
The doom deserved of being bound to die;
But with, and from him, all the race of man.
Ah, baneful wife! Which the more baneful was?
Is't thou, O wife, or that perfidious snake?
The snake's perfidious: thou, too, baneful, wife.
Alas, that first pair had immortal been!
No sooner did the germ begin to sprout,
Than it has perished, and in seed found death.

* The Lion of the tribe of Juda, *Apoc.* v. 5.
† Ante-Nicene Christian Library, vol. xviii. pp. 337-9.

Terrigenæ cœca sorberet fauce nepotes;
Ni pius ille Sator, culpas ignoscere promptus,
Reddere difficilis, sua ne factura periret,
Quæque Deo similis vivens astabat imago,
Dissimilis de morte foret, veniale misertus
Instauraret opus, pomisque vetaret acerbis,
Quæ mandere patres, natorum horrescere dentes;
Donaretque suis semper placatus, ut unde
Culpa dedit mortem, pietas daret inde salutem.
Et velut e spinis mollis rosa surgit acutis,
Nil quod lædat habens, matremque obscurat honore;
Sic Evæ de stirpe sacra veniente Maria,
Virginis antiquæ facinus nova Virgo piaret:
Ut quoniam natura prior vitiata jacebat
Sub ditione necis, Christo nascente, renasci
Posset homo, et veteris maculam deponere carnis.
Hæc ventura senes postquam dixere prophetæ,
Angelus intactæ cecinit properata Mariæ:
Et dictum comitata fides, uterumque puellæ
Sidereum mox implet onus, rerumque Creator
Nascendi sub lege fuit; stupet innuba tensos
Virgo sinus, gaudet que suum paritura Parentem.
Jamque novem lapsis, decimi de limine mensis
Fulgebat sacra dies, cum Virgine feta
Promissum complevit opus Verbum Caro factum.
In nobis habitare volens: tum Maximus Infans
Intemerata sui conservans viscera templi,
Illæsum vacuavit iter, pro Virgine testis
Partus adest, clausa ingrediens, et clausa relinquens,
Quæ nova lux mundo, quæ toto gratia cœlo!
Quis fuit ille nitor, Mariæ cum Christus ab alvo
Processit splendore novo? Velut ipse decoro

Hope could no succour bring; but with blind maw
The first man's grave must swallow all his sons,
Had not the good Creator of all things—
Prompt to forgive, but slow to punish guilt—
Lest His own work should perish utterly,
And e'en the living image like to God
By death unlike should prove—in pity moved,
His shattered work repaired, and barred the way
To bitter fruits, which our first parents ate—
To set thereby their children's teeth on edge—
And granted, with His own for aye appeased,
That whence transgression gave them death, from thence
Filial obedience might salvation give.
As rising from sharp thorns the tender rose,
With nought to harm, its mother's glory pales:
So from Eve's stock the holy Mary comes,
A Virgin new, to expiate the crime,
Which the primeval virgin wrought of old.
That since our pristine nature poisoned lay
Beneath the sway of death; through birth of Christ
Man might be born again to life divine,
And cast aside the stain of former flesh.
These things to come the ancient prophets told;
But now at hand the Angel speeds to sing
To spotless Mary. Faith attends his word.
A heavenly burden fills the Maiden's womb:
The world's Creator to the law submits
Of being born. Meanwhile her heaving breasts
The sacred Virgin all-astonied sees,
And joys, now soon to give her Parent birth.
When lo, the nine months o'er, and tenth begun,
The sacred day begins to shine, whereon,
His promised work complete, the Word made Flesh,
Is of the Virgin Mother for us born.
Wishing to dwell in us, that Mighty Babe,
Guarding intact His temple's inner shrine,
Makes way unscathed—of childbirth virginal
Himself the voucher. Closed was the Orient Gate
At coming in, at going out was closed.
What light new shed on earth, what grace through heaven,
What glory shone, when Christ from Mary's womb,
As Bridegroom from fair chamber, full of joy,

Sponsus ovans thalamo, forma speciosus amœna,
Præ natis hominum, cujus radiante figura
Blandior in labiis diffusa est gratia pulchris.
O facilis pietas! ne nos servile teneret
Peccato dominante jugum, servilia summus
Membra tulit Dominus, primique ab origine mundi
Omnia qui propriis vestit nascentia donis,
Obsitus exiguis habuit velamina pannis:
Quemque procellosi non mobilis unda profundi,
Terrarum non omne solum, spatiosaque lati
Non capit aula poli, puerili in corpore plenus
Mansit, et angusto Deus in præsepe quievit.
Salve sancta Parens, enixa puerpera Regem,
Qui cœlum terramque tenet per sæcula, cujus
Numen, et æterno complectens omnia gyro,
Imperium sine fine manet; quæ ventre beato
Gaudia matris habens cum virginitatis honore.
Nec primam similem visa est, nec habere sequentem,
Sola sine exemplo placuisti femina Christo." *

". . . Semita vitæ
Ad caulas me ruris agat, qua servat amœnum
Pastor ovile bonus, qua vellere prævius albo,
Virginis Agnus ovis, grexque omnis candidus intrat." †

"Discedat synagoga, suo fuscata colore;
Ecclesiam Christus pulchro sibi junxit amore,
Hæc est conspicuo radians in honore Mariæ:
Quæ cum clarifico semper sit nomine Mater,
Semper Virgo manet. Hujus se visibus astans
Luce palam Dominus prius obtulit, ut bona Mater
Grandia divulgans miracula, quæ fuit olim
Advenientis iter, hæc sit redeuntis et index." ‡

* *Carm. Paschale*, L. ii. vv. 1-69, Patr. Lat. Tom. 19, pp. 594-600.
† *Ib.* L. i. 81-4.
‡ L. v. 357-64, p. 742.

Went forth in splendour new, with gracious form,
Of all the sons of men most beautiful,
Radiant in countenance, upon His lips,
So passing sweet, the kindliest grace diffused.
O love too facile! Lest, through reign of sin,
A servile yoke should hold us bound, Himself,
The Lord Supreme, took limbs of slave—e'en He,
Who, from the first beginning of the world,
Clothes all things born to life with His own gifts—
Had for His raiment little swaddling bands.
He—whom nor waters of the stormy deep,
Nor earth's expanse, nor spacious vault of heaven,
Can hold—within the body of a child,
In all His plenitude, abode, and God
Within a straitened manger took repose.
Hail holy Parent, Mother of the King,
Who through the ages heaven and earth controls,
Whose Deity and Empire—all that is
Embracing in circumference etern—
Endless remain:—thou, who, of blessed womb,
Hast mother's joys with honour virginal.
None like is seen before nor after thee.
O peerless Woman, sole thou pleased'st Christ."

"Be mine to tread the path of life that leads
To pastures green, where the Good Shepherd keeps
In pleasantness and peace His fold secure.
There enters first the Lamb who goes before,
Of whitest fleece, sprung from a Virgin sheep.
Him follow after all the shining flock."

"Give o'er the Synagogue, its glory dimmed—
Christ to Himself in beauteous love hath joined
The Church, e'en her that in great honour shines
Conspicuous of Mary; who, for aye
Mother of glorious name, yet still remains
The ever-Virgin. To her sight the Lord
At break of day new-risen first appeared: *
That publishing the mighty miracle,
The same good Mother, who before had been

* See *supra*, p. 191.

"Cantemus, socii, Domino cantemus honorem;
Dulcis amor Christi personet ore pio.
Primus ad ima ruit magna de luce superbus,
Sic homo cum tumuit primus ad ima ruit.
Unius ob meritum cuncti periere minores,
Salvantur cuncti unius ob meritum:
Sola fuit mulier, patuit qua janua letho:
Et qua vita redit, sola fuit mulier." *

"Virgo Maria nitet, nullo temerante pudore;
Post partum Pueri, Virgo Maria nitet." †

PRUDENTIUS.

"Hic draco perfidus indocile
Virginis illicit ingenium,
Ut socium malesuada virum
Mandere cogeret ex vetitis.
* * * * * *
Auctor et ipse doli coluber
Plectitur improbus, ut mulier
Colla trilinguia calce terat.
Sic Coluber muliebre solum
Suscipit, atque virum Mulier.
His ducibus vitiosa dehinc
Posteritas ruit in facinus.
Dumque rudes imitatur avos,
Fasque nefasque simul glomerans,
Impia crimina morte luit.
Ecce venit nova progenies,
Æthere proditus alter Homo,
Non lutens, velut ille prior,
Sed Deus ipse gerens hominem,
Corporeisque carens vitiis,
Fit Caro vivida Sermo Patris,
Numine quem rutilante gravis,
Non thalamo, neque jure tori,
Nec genialibus illecebris,
Intemerata Puella parit.

* *Elegia*, vv. 1-8, *Ib.* p. 753. † *Ib.* vv. 53, 4, p. 757.

The way whereby He came on earth to man,
Might point the road of His return to heaven."

"Come, brothers, sing: sing honour to the Lord;
Let Christ's sweet love find voice in pious strain.
The first man, proud, fell deeply from great light:
In pride aspiring man first deeply fell.
For one man's merit all his sons were lost:
For one Man's merit all His sons are saved.
By woman only yawned the gate of death:
By Woman only opes the gate of life."

"A Virgin, Mary shines, inviolate:
Her childbirth o'er, a Virgin Mary shines."

PRUDENTIUS.

"The treacherous Dragon tempts the indocile soul
Of virgin Eve to force, by suasions ill,
Her husband of forbidden fruit to eat.
That wicked Serpent, author of all guile,
Receives for doom, that Woman, with her heel,
His head and neck, and three-forked tongue should crush.
Thus for the woman's heel the serpent waits:
The woman thus her husband doth ensnare.
With these for leaders, their posterity
Henceforward tainted, hurry on to guilt,
In their rude fathers' wake, add sin to sin,
And pay for impious crime death's penalty.
Lo, comes new progeny. Another Man
From heaven, not clay-formed, as was he of yore,
But God Himself—wearing a human form,
True Man, yet free from all corporeal faults,
The Father's Word—appears in living flesh;
Whom, without earthly fatherhood begot,
Conceivèd by the Holy Spirit's Flame,
A Maid, in spotless purity, brings forth.
This was that ancient lasting enmity,

Hoc erat aspidis, atque hominis
Digladiabile discidium,
Quod modo cernua femineis
Vipera proteritur pedibus.
Edere namque Deum merita,
Omnia Virgo venena domat:
Tractibus anguis inexplicitis
Virus inerme piger revomit,
Gramine concolor in viridi." *

"Virgo Pudicitia speciosis fulget in armis.
* * * * * *
Numquid et intactæ post partum Virginis ullum
Fas tibi jam superest? Post partum Virginis: ex quo
Corporis humani naturam pristina origo
Deseruit, carnemque novam vis ardua sevit,
Atque innupta Deum concepit femina Christum.
* * * * * *
Victa jaces, lutulenta Libido,
Nec mea post Mariam potis es perfringere jura." †

"Intactam thalami Virtus Divina Puellam
Sincero flatu per viscera casta maritat.
Incomperta ortus novitas jubet, ut Deus esse
Credatur Christus sic conditus: innuba Virgo
Nubit Spiritui, vitium nec sentit amoris,
Pubertas signata manet, gravis intus, et extra
Incolumis, florens de fertilitate pudica,
Jam Mater, sed Virgo tamen; maris inscia Mater.
* * * * * *
Ipsa coruscantis monitum sacra Virgo ministri
Credidit, atque ideo concepit credula Christum.
Credentes nam Christus adit: dubitabile pectus
Sub titubante fide refugo contemnit honore.
Virginitas, et prompta fides Christum bibit alvo
Cordis, et intactis condit paritura latebris." ‡

"Sentisne, Virgo nobilis,

* *Cathemerinon* iii. vv. 111-55, P. L. Tom. 59, pp. 804-7.
† *Psychomachia*, vv. 41-8, Tom. 60, pp. 24-9.
‡ *Avotheosis*, vv. 568-84, P. L. Tom. 59, p. 969.

That internecine war to death, between
The Serpent and mankind, which laid at length
The Dragon prostrate, crushed by Woman's feet;
Since now the Virgin, who hath merited
God to bring forth, his venom all subdues.
For see, that Serpent, with entwisted coils,
On the green grass, himself of colour green,
His venom, harmless now, slow vomits forth."

"The Virgin, Chastity, in beauty clad
Of glittering arms, thus Lust, her foe rebuked.
What! longer, any right remain to thee,
After the Childbirth of the Virgin pure?
After that Virgin's Childbirth! When, in sort,
Man's fleshly nature its first origin
Had lost; and mightily a force Divine
Sowed flesh anew; and Woman, husbandless,
The Christ, true God conceivèd—very Man
Of mortal Mother, with His Father One.
Prostrate thou art, and conquered, slimy Lust,
Nor, after Mary, canst my rights infringe."

"The Spouse Divine the untouched Maiden weds,
Breathing within her holiest influence.
The Birth's unheard-of prodigy demands,
That Christ, thus formed, should be believed true God.
The unwedded Virgin, now the Spirit's Bride,
Her senses free from taint of earthly love,
In purity conceives. Virginity
Flowers into fruitfulness. She thus becomes
The Virgin Mother—she who 'knows not man.'
When came the shining Minister from heaven,
The holy Virgin straight his word believed;
And, through believing, thus the Christ conceived.
'Tis to believers Christ is pleased to come:
The heart of fickle faith that doubts, He spurns
Unhonoured, and withholds His proffered grace.
Virginity and ready faith drink in
Christ to the inmost soul, from whence, there formed
In hiding-places pure, they bring Him forth."

"Dost thou not, noble Virgin, well perceive,

Matura per fastidia
Pudoris intactum decus
Honore partus crescere ?" *

JUVENCUS.

"Interea thalamis connubia festa parabant
In regione Canan, ubi clari Mater Iesu,
Nato cum pariter, convivia concelebrabat.
Vina sed interea convivis deficiebant:
Tunc Mater Christum per talia dicta precatur:
Cernis lætitiæ jam defecisse liquorem ?
Adsint, Nate, bonis ex te data munera mensis.
Olli respondit terrarum gloria, Christus:
Festinas, genitrix: nondum me talia cogit
Ad victus hominum tempus concedere dona.
Mensarum tunc inde vocat lætata ministros
Mater, et imperiis Nati parere jubebat." †

"Percurret debita letho
Atque animam Matris ferro fulgente machæra,
Quo pateant tecti tenebrosa volumina cordis." ‡

"Hæc [Maria] desponsa suo per tempora certa propinquo
Abdita virgineis casta pubescere tectis,
Et servare diem jussis permissa parentum." §

ENNODIUS.

Hymnus X. De S. Maria.

"Ut Virginem fetam loquar,
Quid laude dignum Mariæ ?

* *Hymn* xi. "Matri longa decem tulerunt fastidia menses." Virgil, *Ecl.*, iv. 61.

† *Evang. Hist.* L. ii. vv. 128-39, Tom. 19, p. 158.

‡ *Ib.* L. i. 246-8, p. 93.

§ *Evang. Hist.* vv. 89-92. Canisius (*De Deip.* L. i. c. 12), and Suarez (Pars iii. Qu. 29, Art. 2, Disp. 7), prove from the Fathers that there was a place in the Temple at Jerusalem wherein virgins consecrated to God dwelt, and that in this house of virgins the Blessed Virgin Mary lived from her third year—when, as is piously believed, she was presented by her parents in the Temple—until her espousals. We must suppose that there was some such like place at Nazareth also, to which Juvencus here alludes. And this would be no other than a retired chamber in her parents' house, where Mary spent her time with God, and prayed with closed doors to her heavenly Father. To such secret chambers usual amongst the Jews (*Judith* viii. 5) Juvencus thus refers:

"Sed secreta domus precibus penetralia castis
Claudantur, paucisque Deum venerabere verbis." (*Ib.* v. 620.)

"Keep closed the secret chamber for chaste prayers,
And worship God in few but fervent words."

That through thy expectation's long delay,
The intact glory of thy chastity
By thy child-bearing's honour is enhanced?"

JUVENCUS.

"The Marriage-feast at Cana is prepared:
And Jesus' Mother, with her glorious Son,
Invited, to the wedding banquet comes.
Lo, wine ere long the guests begins to fail.
The Mother then to Christ in such wise prays:
'Seest Thou, Son, the cup of joy hath failed?
Let Thy good gifts the table's want supply.'
To her makes answer earth's sole glory, Christ:
'Thou hastest, Mother, not yet is the time
For Me to grant such favours for men's food.'
In joy the Mother then the waiters calls,
And bids obey the orders of her Son."

"That sword of glittering steel, with death* surcharged,
E'en through the Mother's soul shall pierce; that so
The hidden heart's dark folds may open lie."

"To Joseph her near kinsman now espoused,
For certain time, in dwelling virginal
Lives Mary hidden, maidenly apart,
Till parents' will the nuptial day appoint."

ENNODIUS.

"How of the Virgin Mother shall I sing?
What utter worthily in Mary's praise?

* *i.e.*, the death of her Son.

Det partus, ornet, exigat,
Quod clausa Porta, quod patens
Exposcit, ipsa suggerat.
Sint verba ceu miraculum.
Quid, mens, requiras ordinem?
Natura totum perdidit.
Hoc est salus, quod vincimur.
Cum sola Virgo degeret,
Concepit aure Filium:
Stupente factum corpore
Turgescit alvus Spiritu.
Quod lingua jecit semen est,
In carne Verbum stringitur.
De Matre cunctus noster est,
De Patre nil distans Deus:
Quæ gignit et qui præcipit.
Nil major Ille servulis,
Sed nec minor Creante fit.
Fons dicta clausus accipit,
Fons membra clausus egerit:
Nec rima cessit arctior,
Et vera proles emicat.
Dic, Mater et Virgo, precor,
Quisquamque claudit exiens?
Arctantur exta fetibus,
Vinclum pudoris natus est." *

ARATOR.

After our Lord's Ascension from Mount Olivet the Apostles return to Jerusalem.

". . . Qua tunc statione sedebat
Porta, Maria, Dei Genitrix intacta Creantis,
A Nato formata suo. Mala criminis Evæ
Virgo secunda fugat: nulla est injuria sexus:
Restituit quod prima tulit. Non voce querelas
Excitet, aut gemitu mærentia corda fatiget
Antiqua pro lege dolor; scelera ipsa nefasque
Hac potius mercede placent, mundoque redempto
Sors melior de clade venit. Persona ruinam,

* *Carm.* ii. 19, Patr. Lat. Tom. 63, p. 332.

Her Son must give, adorn, draw out my theme;
And what the Gate, or shut, or open lists,
Herself suggest. Here words should marvels be.
Why order seek, where nature's self is lost?
Our very safety is our powerlessness.
The Virgin, dwelling all alone, conceived
A Son, His body by the Spirit formed.
O prodigy! within her blessed womb
That which the tongue of Gabriel spoke was seed,
Whence sprung the Word Divine in flesh conceived.
As Mother's Offspring, He is all our own:
As Father's, He is God brought nigh to us,
Of Parents twain perfect and only Son;
Of her who bore, and Him who reigns supreme.
No greater is He than His own poor slaves;
Nor than the world's Creator is He less.
She, called the Fountain Sealed, receives Him in,
And self-same Fountain Sealed, gives forth His limbs.
Her own true Offspring leaves the sacred womb,
The seal unbroken, and inviolate.
Mother and Virgin, Jesus born of thee
Is guardian of thine intact purity."

ARATOR.

"The Apostles to Jerusalem return:
Where Mary then abode, God's all-pure Gate,
Her Maker's Mother, formed by her own Son.
What ills through guilt the virgin Eve had wrought,
A second Virgin hath now chased away.
The wrong by woman done is all annulled:
What took the first, the second hath restored.
Cease, sorrow, more to raise the voice of wail,
Nor weary mourning hearts with vain regrets
For pristine order that's now past and gone.
Those very sins and crimes the rather please,
And, such our gain, all losses compensate.

Non natura dedit: tunc femina feta periclum,
Nunc tumuit paritura Deum, mortalia gignens,
Et divina ferens, per quam Mediator in orbem
Prodiit, et veram portavit ad æthera carnem."

S. VENANTIUS FORTUNATUS.

Ave Maris Stella.

Ave Maris Stella,*	Hail, thou Star of Ocean,
Dei Mater alma,	Portal of the sky,
Atque semper Virgo,	Ever-Virgin Mother
Felix cœli porta.	Of the Lord Most High.
Sumens illud Ave	Oh, by Gabriel's Ave
Gabrielis ore,	Uttered long ago,
Funda nos in pace,	Eva's name reversing,
Mutans Hevæ nomen.	Stablish peace below.
Solve vincla reis,	Break the captive's fetters,
Profer lumen cæcis,	Light on blindness pour,
Mala nostra pelle,	All our ills expelling,
Bona cuncta posce.	Every bliss implore.
Monstra te esse Matrem:	Show thyself a Mother,
Sumat per te preces,	Offer Him our sighs,
Qui, pro nobis natus,	Who for us Incarnate,
Tulit esse tuus.	Did not thee despise.
Virgo singularis,	Virgin of all virgins,
Inter omnes mitis,	To thy shelter take us:
Nos culpis solutos	Gentlest of the gentle,
Mites fac et castos,	Chaste and gentle make us.
Vitam præsta puram,	Still as on we journey,
Iter para tutum,	Help our weak endeavour
Ut videntes Jesum,	Till with thee and Jesus,
Semper collætemur.	We rejoice for ever.

* S. Jerome (*De Nominibus Hebraicis, De Matthæo*, Opp. T. iii. p. 92, Venet. 1767) says: "It is more generally supposed that the name, Mary, signifies, *She who enlightens* (Illuminatrix). With this I do not agree. It is better to take the word as meaning either *Star of the Sea*, or *Bitter Sea*." He gives also (*De Exodo, ib.* p. 21), Smyrna maris, *Myrrh* (perhaps, *foam of the sea*). See, too, Fragment. ii. pp. 555-60, and Fragment. iv. p. 577, *Ibid.*

Since, through the world's redemption, from defeat
Hath come a better lot than was before.
Not nature, but a person, ruin wrought.
Child-bearing woman then but peril gave;
Now she conceived who was to bring forth God—
Mother of One both mortal and Divine.
By her the Mediator comes to earth,
Who with Him bears His own true Flesh to heaven."

S. VENANTIUS FORTUNATUS.

Sit laus Deo Patri,
Summo Christo decus,
Spiritui Sancto,
Tribus honor unus. Amen.

Through the highest heaven
To the Almighty Three
Father, Son, and Spirit,
One same glory be. Amen.*

Quem terra, pontus, sidera.

Quem terra, pontus, sidera †
Colunt, adorant, prædicant,
Trinam regentem machinam,
Claustrum Mariæ bajulat.

The God, whom earth, and sea, and sky,
Adore, and laud, and magnify,
Who o'er their threefold fabric reigns,
The Virgin's spotless womb contains.

Cui luna, sol, et omnia
Deserviunt per tempora,
Perfusa cœli gratia,
Gestant puellæ viscera.

The God, whose will by moon and sun,
And all things in due course is done,
Is borne upon a maiden's breast,
By fullest heavenly grace possessed.

Mirantur ergo sæcula,
Quod Angelus fert semina;
Quod autem Virgo concipit,
Et corde credens accipit.‡

Hence age to age in marvel sings,
What fruitful word the Angel brings;
The Virgin's faith the word receives,
And in her womb her God conceives.

* Fr. Caswall's translation. † In the text of Fortunatus, æthera.
‡ This stanza is not in the Breviary.

Beata Mater, munere
Cujus supernus Artifex,
Mundum pugillo continens,
Ventris sub arca clausus est.

How blest that Mother in whose shrine
The great Artificer Divine,
Whose hand contains the earth and sky,
Vouchsafed, as in His ark, to lie!

Beata cœli nuntio,
Fecunda Sancto Spiritu,
Desideratus gentibus
Cujus per alvum fusus est.

Blest, in the message Gabriel brought;
Blest, by the work the Spirit wrought;
From whom the great Desire of earth
Took human Flesh and human birth.

Jesu, tibi sit gloria,
Qui natus es de Virgine,
Cum Patre et almo Spiritu,
In sempiterna sæcula. Amen.

All honour, laud, and glory be,
O Jesu, Virgin-born to Thee!
All glory, as is ever meet,
To Father and to Paraclete.
Amen.*

O Gloriosa Virginum.

O Gloriosa virginum,†
Sublimis inter sidera, ‡
Qui te creavit parvulum §
Lactente nutris ubere. ||

O Glorious Lady, Virgin blest,
Enthroned above the starry sphere,
A little infant at thy breast
With milk thou didst thy Maker rear.

Quod Heva tristis abstulit,
Tu reddis almo germine:
Intrent ut astra flebiles,
Cœli recludis cardines. ¶

Thou, what we lost through hapless Eve,
With thy sweet Blossom dost restore;
Re-opening wide to all who grieve
Of long-closed Paradise the door.

* Translation, except that of the third verse, by Mason Neale.
† In text—"Domina."
‡ *Ib.* "Excelsa super sidera."
§ *Ib.* "provide."
|| *Ib.* "Lactasti sacro ubere."
¶ *Ib.* "Cœli fenestra facta est."

Tu Regis alti janua,
Et aula * lucis fulgida :
Vitam datam per Virginem,
Gentes redemptæ, plaudite.

The Gate thou art of Heaven's high King,
Of Light Divine the brilliant Hall,
Life given through the Virgin sing,
Applaud, ye ransomed nations all.

Jesu, tibi sit gloria,
Qui natus es de Virgine,
Cum Patre et almo Spiritu,
In sempiterna sæcula. Amen.

O Jesus, born of Virgin bright,
Immortal glory be to Thee,
Praise to the Father infinite,
And Holy Ghost eternally.
Amen.

HYMN IN HONOUR OF OUR BLESSED LADY BY S. CUCHUMNEUS.†

Cantemus in omni die,
Concinentes varie,
Conclamantes Deo dignum
Hymnum Sanctæ Mariæ.

Daily sing to holy Mary,
Varying your notes of praise :
Of the Mother of your Saviour
Worthy hymns in honour raise.

Bis per chorum hinc et inde
Collaudamus Mariam,
Ut vox pulset omnem aurem
Per laudem vicariam.

Joining in alternate chorus,
All responsively rejoice :
Vie in louder praise of Mary,
Hearing each the other's voice.

Maria de tribu Juda,
Summi Mater Domini,
Opportunam dedit curam
Ægrotanti homini.

Daughter of the tribe of Juda,
Mother of the Lord Most High,
Mary gave her timely succour
To man sick and near to die.

Gabriel advexit verbum
Sinu Patris paterno,
Quod conceptum et susceptum
In utero materno.

From the Father's loving Bosom
Gabriel brought the joyful word,
Which the Virgin straight believing,
In her womb conceived her Lord.

Hæc est summa, hæc est sancta,
Virgo venerabilis,
Quæ ex fide non recessit,
Sed extitit stabilis.

She, that peerless holy Virgin,
Whom all love to venerate,
Never from her faith receded,
Ever kept her first estate.

* In text—"Porta."

† An Irish Saint who lived towards the close of the sixth century.

Huic Matri nec inventa
Ante nec post similis,
Nec de prole fuit plane
Humanæ originis.

Per mulierem et lignum
Mundus prius periit,
Per Mulieris virtutem
Ad salutem rediit.

Maria Mater miranda
Patrem suum edidit,
Per quam aqua late lotus
Totus mundus credidit.

Hæc concepit Margaritam—
Non sunt vana somnia—
Pro qua sane Christiani
Vendunt sua omnia.

Tunicam per totum textam
Christo Mater fecerat,
Quæ, peracta Christi morte,
Sorte statim steterat.

Induamus arma lucis,
Loricam et galeam,
Ut simus Deo perfecti,
Suscepti per Mariam.

Amen, amen, adjuramus
Merita Puerperæ,
Ut non possit flamma pyræ
Nos diræ decerpere.

Christi nomen invocemus,
Angelis sub testibus,
Ut fruamur et scribamur
Litteris cœlestibus.

Cantemus in omni die, etc.

Woman, like this Virgin Mother,
None before was ever seen,
After her will none be like her;
Heaven-elected has she been.

Woman, and the tree of knowledge
Ruin for the world obtained:
Woman, and the Tree of Passion
Life and full redemption gained.

Mary, oh! most wondrous Mother,
Gave to her own Father birth,
By whom washed are all in water,
Who believe throughout the earth.

She conceived that Pearl so precious
(These are no vain dreams I tell),
That to buy it, Christians often
Gladly all their treasures sell.

Mary wove a seamless garment
For her Child in years long past;
During His most bitter Passion
For it lots the soldiers cast.

Put we on of light the armour,
Shield and helmet—feet well shod—
That, sustained by Mary's succour,
Perfect we may meet our God.

Amen, Amen, through the merits
Of Christ's Mother let us pray,
That no fire of wrath assail us
At the last tremendous day.

May we aye invoking Jesus,
Angels witnessing our strife,
One day joy, at our names finding
Written in the Book of Life.

Daily sing to holy Mary, etc.

CHAPTER XIII.

AN ÆTHIOPIC HYMN.

The following Æthiopic Hymn was, amongst others, first published by the Rev. J. M. Rodwell, an Anglican clergyman and learned Orientalist. It is reproduced in an article of the *Dublin Review*, April, 1868. The able writer there says that "it is essentially a dogmatic hymn, and in some of its parts reads more like a creed than a chant. It is meant to teach the people of Abyssinia the doctrine of the Incarnation, as well as devotion to our Lady; and the two are so woven together as to be inseparable." After examining one by one the various dogmatic expressions contained in it, he arrives at the conclusion that its date must be assigned to the time between the Councils of Ephesus 431, and Chalcedon 451; showing on the one hand that the hymn was composed after the condemnation of Nestorianism and the definitions of the former Council, and on the other hand, not later than the epoch of Eutyches; and, furthermore, also from intrinsic evidence, that it cannot have subsequently suffered interpolation either from Catholics or heretics. "The hymn," he says, "may possibly have been sung in Alexandria in the last years of S. Cyril, and transported from thence to Æthiopia. In fact it is one of a number of proofs which occur, both among Catholics and heretics, that just before the separation of the great heresy of Eutyches from the Church a vast increase of devotion to Our Blessed Lady had taken place. . . . For how else can we account for the remarkable fact that among all the old separated bodies, even Nestorians, much more among Jacobites of every class, and the schismatic Greeks, there is an extraordinary devotion to the Blessed Virgin, than that they brought it with them from the Catholic Church, prior to their separation?"*

"*In the Name of the Father, and of His Son, and of the Holy Ghost, one God. And now we will write the praises of our Lady, and Mother of God, the Virgin*

* *Dublin Review*, April, 1868, p. 354.

Mary, to whom prayer and petition shall be offered, by the children of Baptism, world without end. Amen.

"Thou shalt be named the Beloved One, O thou blessed among women. Thou art that second Chamber which is called the Holy of Holies, wherein were the tables of the Covenant of the ten commandments, writ by the finger of God, who of old made announcement to us, by the Iota, which is the first letter of the name of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who took flesh of thee, without change, and became the Mediator of the new covenant by shedding His Holy Blood, to purify believers and to purchase a holy people.

"Pray for us, O Holy.

"*Wherefore we will all magnify thee, O Our Lady, pure Mother of God, at all times; we will pray and look up to thee, that we may find compassion with the Lover of Mankind.*

"The Ark that was all covered with gold, and made of incorruptible wood,* shall picture to us Him who was God the Word, and being God, became Man, without change or separation, pure and incapable of corruption, equal with the Father, . . . who took flesh from thee without stain to the Godhead.

"Over the Sanctuary were the Cherubim painted with the painting of God the Word, who took flesh from thee, O pure One without change, that He might be the forgiver of our sins, and the blotter out of our iniquities.

"Thou art the pure chest of gold in which was laid up the manna, that bread which came down from Heaven, and the Giver of life to all the world.

"Thou art that candlestick of gold which didst bear the shining Lamp, all times a light to the world, Light of Light, without beginning, very God of very God, who was made man of thee without change, and at His coming gave light to us who dwell in darkness and in the shadow of death, and guided our feet into the way of peace, in the mystery of His holy wisdom.

"Thou art that golden censer which bore the coals of blessed fire, which He who shall forgive us our sins and do away transgression took of thee—Who is God the Word, Who became Man of thee, Who ascended up to His Father, as incense from an honourable distilment.

"Garden of pleasures, garden of joy, which God hath prepared for the saints ere the world was made, planted with large trees for adornment, kept by Cherubim and Seraphim, one of whom visited thee from Heaven, and said in the holy House (Betamakedasa), *Blessed art thou of women, and blessed the fruit of thy womb. The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee and the Power of the Highest shall overshadow thee, for that which shall be born from thee shall be a Light to all the world.*

"Thou art the sweet-smelling flower that sprang up from the root of Jesse.

"The rod of Aaron, that budded though unplanted, and unwatered, such art thou, O Mother of Christ, our very God, who came without human father, and wrought salvation.

"All the saints shall say to thee, as is their due, *Pray for us, O thou who*

* The simile of the Ark in the tabernacle is a very frequent one in early hymnology. It occurs in the Coptic hymn quoted by Passaglia, *De Imm. Virg. Concept.* i. pp. 202, 240. In another Coptic passage she is compared to the Ark of Noe. *Ib.* p. 252.

*art full of grace.** Thou shalt be exalted above Archbishops, honoured greatly above Prophets. In thee is majesty of aspect exceeding the majesty of Cherubim and Seraphim. Thou art truly the glory of our race, and the petitioner for life to our souls. Pray for us to our Lord Jesus Christ to strengthen us in the right faith, even in the faith of Him, and to bestow compassion and mercy upon us, and to forgive us our sins in the multitude of His mercy.

"The crown of our glory, and beginning of our salvation, and foundation of our purification is in the Virgin Mary, who is the Mother of God, of the Word who became Man for our salvation, when at length He who was perfect God became very Man; and therefore that Virgin bare Him miraculously. Who can set forth the might of that Birth?

"For by His own will, and in the good pleasure of His Father, the Holy Ghost came forth and saved us.

"Great is the glory of thy virginity.

"O Mary—perfect Virgin—thou hast found grace. The Lord is with thee. Thou art the ladder seen by Jacob which reached from earth to Heaven, and by which the angels of God were ascending and descending.

"Thou art the wood which Moses saw in the flame of fire, when the wood was not consumed.

"The Son of God descended and dwelt in thy womb, and the fire of His Divinity consumed not thy body.

"Thou art that field in which seed was not sown, and yet living Fruit came forth from thee.

"Thou art the treasure which Joseph purchased, and found therein the precious Pearl, Our Saviour Jesus Christ, carried in thy womb, and whom thou didst bear into the world.

"Rejoice, O Mother of God, thou joy of Angels.

"Rejoice, O pure one, foretold by prophets.

"Rejoice, for thou hast found grace, the Lord is with thee.

"Rejoice, for thou hast received the message of the Angel of Joy to the whole world! rejoice, O Mother of the world's Creator.

"Rejoice, for thou art worthily called 'Full of grace.' Rejoice, O Mother of God. Rejoice, thou who deliverest the living, in the salvation of all who live.

"Rejoice, thou who didst suckle with milk Him who nourisheth all creation. Rejoice, O Holy one, Mother to all who live. To thee do we look up. Pray for us.

"O Virgin, O Holy, O Mother of the Lord. Rightly art thou called, she who hath wondrously borne the King. A mystery abode on thee for our salvation. Let us keep silence, for we cannot express it aright, on account

* "The Church of Axum was an absolute copy of the Church of Alexandria. It had no life of its own, and reflected simply the dominant party in Alexandria. This being the case, the hymn throws light on many things. We have in it a specimen of the common popular teaching of the See of S. Mark. There is an obscure tradition that the addition of the latter clause of the *Hail Mary* was first used in Alexandria. If it can be made out, as we believe, that this hymn was probably composed before the Council of Chalcedon, this tradition becomes by no means to be despised. The men who could sing 'All the saints shall say to thee, as is thy due, Pray for us, O thou that art full of grace,' come very near to the *Hail Mary*." *Dublin Review*, *Ib.* p. 330.

of the dignity of the Benefactor, for the manifold marvel of the appearance of the Word of the Living Father, who descended upon Mount Sinai, and gave the law to Moses, and shrouded the top of the mountain with cloud and with smoke, with darkness and with whirlwind (naphs); and by the sound of the voice of trumpets, which struck those who stood by with fear.

"He it was who came down unto thee, O Mountain that didst speak in humility, even the Lover of men, who was made Man of thee without change, a perfect body, rational, like us in soul, in which dwelt the Wisdom of God, become perfect Man in order that He might save man and pardon his sins, and cause him to dwell in Heaven, and return to his former abode, in the multitude of His compassion and mercy.

"Ineffable is the dignity of the Virgin! for the Lord elected her, came and dwelt in her, even He who had dwelt in light, to which darkness approacheth not, was borne in her womb nine months—even the Invisible, the Inscrutable—and she bare Him, Mary a Virgin still.

"This is the stone which Daniel the prophet saw, that was cut out of the lofty mountain without hands—the Word which proceeded out from the Father came and was incarnate of the Virgin, with no human parent, and saved us.

"Thou art the pure branch, and the faithful vessel of the right faith of our holy Fathers, O holy Mother of God, pure Virgin, who hast borne to us the Word of the Father, Jesus Christ, who came to save us.

"Thou art the Mother of the Light, the honourable Mother of the Lord, who didst bear the unseen Word, and after bearing Him didst remain a Virgin. Praise and benediction shall be given thee.

"Where is the tongue that shall be able to utter what should be said of thee, O Virgin Mother of the Word of the Father? Thou hast become the throne of the King whom the Cherubim do bear. We will call thee Blessed, O Blessed One, and will remember thy name to all generations, O fair Dove, Mother of Our Lord Jesus Christ.

"Rejoice, Mary, Mother and Handmaid! for Him who is in thy womb shall angels worship, cherubim adore, and seraphim without ceasing outspread their wings and say, This is the King of Glory. He hath come to forgive the sins of the world in the greatness of His mercy.

"All the Heavenly hosts exclaim, Blessed art thou; thou art a second Heaven upon earth; the Portal of the East; Mary the Virgin; a pure Star, and the Bride of the Father; the Father looked down out of Heaven and beholding none like thee, sent His Only-begotten, and He became Man of thee.

"All generations shall call thee Blessed—thee only, O Our Lady, Mother of God.

"Great things and marvellous shall they speak concerning thee, O thou City of God; for thou hast been the dwelling-place of the Word of the Father.

"All the kings of the earth shall come to thy light, and the people to thy brightness, O Virgin Mary. All generations shall call thee Blessed, and shall worship Him who was born of thee, and shall magnify Him. Thou art that very Cloud which has caused the waters of the rain, a type of the Only-begotten, to appear to us. . . .

"Rejoice, O thou intellectual Garden, wherein Christ the Second Adam made His abode. . . .

"Rejoice, O thou pure Star, adorned with all the beauty of Praise; He hath come and taken flesh of thee.

"Rejoice, O Bush, which the fire of His Deity did not consume.

"Rejoice, O Handmaid, Mother and Virgin, thou second Heaven, who didst bear in the flesh Him who rideth upon the Cherubim and Seraphim. . . .

"The Ark was she of one Person of the Holy Trinity. She was that Jerusalem, the city of the Prophets, and the abode of joy to all the Saints. . . .

"Let us sanctify Mary as the Mother of God, because in the city of David Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ was born of her. So all we, these Thy believing people, will call Mary Blessed, for she was Virgin and Mother at once. Rejoice, O pure Virgin free from stain. . . . Let us celebrate the mystery which hath been revealed to us, for He who had not been incarnate became Man; He who had no beginning had a commencement; He who had no day, had a day assigned Him; the Unknown was revealed, the Invisible seen, the Son of the Living God became the Man Jesus Christ whom we adore and praise. Amen.

"All the hosts of spiritual angels, the flames of fire, cry aloud and speak one to the other. The Seraphim say 'Holy,' and the Cherubim say 'Praiseworthy,' and the Raphael say 'Blessed,' God Almighty. They open their lips, and lift up the thought of their hearts, and open the eyes of their hearts, and say with one accord and one voice, 'Holy, Holy, Holy, is the Lord of Sabaoth. Right full are the heavens and earth of the sanctity of His glory.'

"We all glorify Thee, O Lord, with our mouths and lips, and wholly exalt Thy name that Thou mayest keep us all the livelong day, and by night vouchsafe us light—Thou Lord, who destroyed not the world.

"Show us quickly now, O Lord, Thy compassion and mercy, this day and this night.

"We will make our plaint and cry to Thee evermore, that Thou have mercy and compassion upon us, even as a father hath mercy and compassion on his son.

"Recompense us not after the work of our hand, and remember not our offences and wrong, for Thou hast created and formed us. And we know not the day of our death when Thou wilt call us hence. We come unto Thee. There is none that can save us and be our surety. We are the work of Thy hands. Destroy us not.

"Deliver us, O Lord our God, from the ill of suffering, and affliction, and penury, in heaven and in earth. Grant us, O Lord, wisdom and knowledge, that we may know and understand the Salvation of our souls.

"We ask and beseech Thee, O Lord, to look on us in Thy mercy, and do Thou cover us under the shadow of Thy wings: protect us with the shield of Thy Son; fortify Thou us with Thy might, O Prince of the Angels.

"Send us, O our Lord, and merciful Lord of the Watcher Angels, who slumber not, that they may save us from the might of our foe and from the contentions of the devil, who evermore assaulteth us.

"Cause us to hear, O Lord, the accents of the Angels and the announcements of the holy Prophets, that we may know and understand the things of heaven and earth.

"Uplift our heads, and drive away from us all our foes and enemies, and put to shame the evil of death, and let him swiftly flee from us, and let Thine angels come to show us Thy compassion and mercy.

"Show Thyself to us and speak to us, O Lord, as Thou didst show Thyself and speak to Abraham Thy beloved. . . .

"And didst cause to come down a lamb as the ransom of Thy servant Isaac—and to Moses Thy servant—sending to him the angel, whose name is Gabriel, who appeared to him in a flame of fire in the Bush, and spoke to him in the Pillar of cloud;

"And Michael, and madest him Thy people's guide in the land of Egypt, and didst deliver him from the land of Pharaoh.

"In like manner manifest Thyself to us, and speak to us secretly as in dreams of the night, that we may praise Thee, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost for ever. Amen."

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